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Middle East

February 2016
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Love Bites!

Romantic Valentine's Day recipes for that special someone

WIN!
DINING VOUCHERS AND GOURMET HOTEL STAYS

STARS OF THE MONTH
Creative ways with root veggies

CHINESE NEW YEAR
Celebrate the festival in style with classic favourites

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE PROFITEROLES WITH SALTED CARAMEL CREAM, recipe p50

DISCOVER FLAVOURS OF THE WORLD.....

MALDIVIAN CULINARY CREATIONS

MEDITERRANEAN DELIGHTS IN PHUKET

CPI MEDIA GROUP

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Welcome!



Just as we get back into a normal (sort of) routine after January's health-kick, another month of celebration hits us. First up we have Chinese New Year on February 8, shortly followed by Shrove Tuesday, aka Pancake Day on February 9, and then Valentine's Day on February 14 – and what's best? All three occasions involve food! Add good food to any equation and what's not to love?

If you've never celebrated Chinese New Year before, why not throw a dinner party for your friends and mix things up a little? We've got a selection of mouthwatering recipes inside *(Ken Hom's Chinese New Year, pg52)* that are perfect for sharing and not too difficult to make.

Or, if Chinese cuisine isn't quite up your street, impress the special person in your life with a romantic, homemade meal – celebrity chef James Martin is on hand with a delicious dinner menu to ensure your evening runs smoothly, just flip to page 34 for the recipes. Alternatively, put a local spin on the traditional Valentine's Day meal and whip up an authentic Lebanese dinner *(Lebanese supper for two, pg28)*.

If you're looking for something a little further afield, take a look at this month's travel features *(Barefoot bliss, pg66 and Picture perfect Phuket, pg74)*, which detail two magical culinary getaways – ideal for a romantic weekend or just a relaxing break from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Whether you decide to travel or not this month, enjoy discovering flavours of new cuisines, and continue to challenge yourself in the kitchen – share your creations with us via social media, or drop me a line – we love hearing about your foodie experiences!

Have a fabulous February, everyone!

Sophie
Editor

WHAT WE'RE LOVING!



"This warm beet, chorizo & pear salad is delicious and combines such great flavours," says sales manager, Carol.



"I'm loving this watermelon & orange blossom lemonade. it's healthy and so refreshing" says sales executive, Liz.



Sales manager, Michael says: "I'm a big burger fan and this light beef & feta burger with horseradish dressing is a perfect alternative to an unhealthy takeaway".

goodfood Middle East

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WIN!

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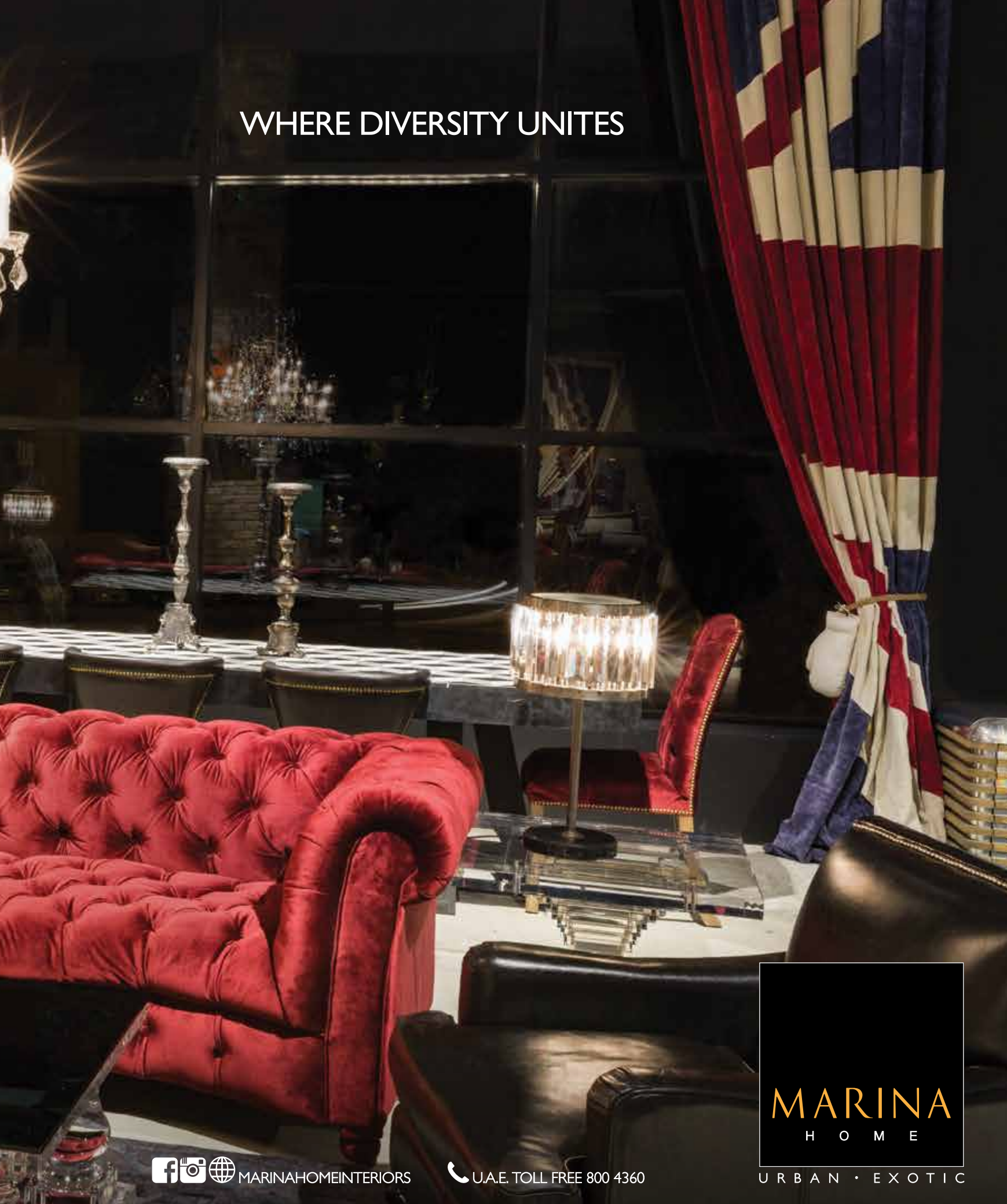
V Suitable for vegetarians
You can freeze it
Not suitable for freezing
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
Low fat 12g or less per portion
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.

Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients
GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten
Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:
P Contains pork
Contains alcohol



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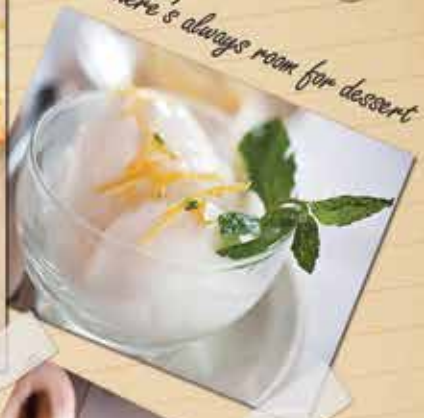


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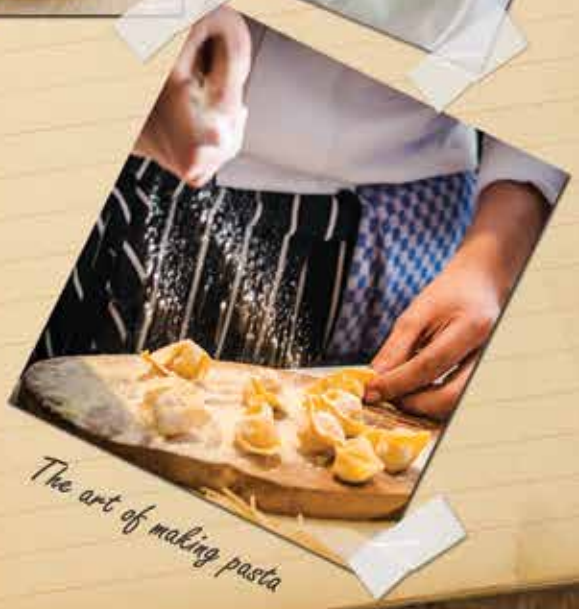


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There's always room for dessert



The art of making pasta

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EXPERT Q&A

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

It's the month of romance, but I'm looking to escape the expensive fad. Where do you recommend visiting for honest, quality food, in a nice setting – without the price tag?



Kate Fisher

A highly qualified and experienced nutritionist who is a trained microbiologist, and graduate of Nutritional Medicine from university of Surrey. Among other things she has worked with private clinics and food brands, as a nutrition consultant.

For a fabulous meal that won't break the bank, I'd recommend Bussola, the Italian restaurant on the upper deck at the Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort. It offers stunning views of the beach in a really nice setting, yet at the same time is informal and relaxed. Secondly, Trattoria Toscana in Souk Madinat Jumeirah is lovely. The restaurant offers a cosy, welcoming feel and the food is fresh and satisfying – then you can take a romantic walk around the Madinat after dinner, or perhaps an abra boat ride.

No longer in a portacabin, legendary Bu Qtair in Umm Suqeim 2 now has an outdoor seating area that looks over the water of a small marina. Queue and choose your fish and prawns in spicy marinade and eat the freshly fried morsels. Cutlery optional. Or, sit under the stars and watch the Burj Al Arab light up in all its glory without the price tag. Take a picnic blanket to sunset beach and order delivery. I've done this with Pizza Express in the past and it works brilliantly or try the new Deliveroo app that geo-locates. If you don't mind romancing a day early, tuck into gourmet street food from Vida while watching the sun go down over the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary and a stunning skyline view at The Terrace, Dubai Creek Harbour (more info on instagram @Theterracedch). Only open on Fridays and Saturdays.

Sally Prosser

Author of award-winning food and travel blog mycustardpie.com and keen eater. Champion of sourcing local, ethical, seasonal ingredients, knowing where your food comes from and the impact it has on your health and the planet. Loves custard.





Tomas Reger

Award-winning freelance chef and food consultant. Originally from the Czech Republic, he started his culinary career in London. Founder of Tomas Reger Food Consultants, he is now the executive chef of Intersect by Lexus, DIFC.

I would recommend avoiding the licensed restaurants on Valentine's Day. They all take multiple sets of reservations, which will leave you stuck waiting for a table, or being rushed through your dinner. Have a romantic evening instead. Go for a walk on the beach and enjoy a casual dinner in one of the low-key places around there (my personal favourite if Kif Kif, for an honest Moroccan fare). Afterwards, finish the night with drinks at a bar with a great view and terrace, like Uptown in Jumeirah Beach Hotel, or for something really cosy, visit Cave in Conrad Dubai.

The Observatory in Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel is great, the view is fantastic and the price for food works out around Dhs200 per head on a normal night. You have a great view of the palm at 52 floors high, and you can even pop down and see me at The Croft on the 5th floor for a drink afterwards. Secondly, I'd recommend The Farm at Al Barari. It's such a lovely chilled out space with lots of greenery and a beautiful setting when sitting outside around the lake. The food uses great, fresh ingredients and they have a lovely lounge area outside too for relaxing and enjoying the surrounding nature – something that's hard to find in Dubai.

Darren Velvick

Head chef at The Croft, Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites, the former patron chef of Table9 has also been head chef at two Michelin-starred restaurant, Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley, and worked alongside Gordon Ramsay at Pétrus.



Compiled by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs SUPPLIED

Your *say*

We love hearing from you!

Win!



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Star Letter



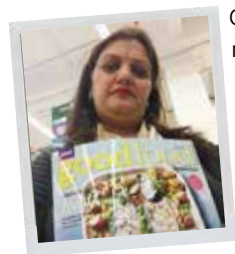
The holidays are definitely over and it's back to work and lighter eating after the indulgences over the holidays. I really enjoyed the January issue of BBC Good Food Middle East because it didn't give you the chance to make excuses for making unhealthy food, however, encouraged you to jump in head first to eating clean and thinking healthy. I was so taken in by this month's issue that I took it to work as it acted as a guide for some of my patients who required nutritional advice. 'The clean and lean 3-day healthy diet' and the '3 healthy sides' recipe feature, was just what I needed to create yummy but low in calorie meals, followed by the 'super salads' – I really couldn't have asked for anything better. Thank you for making it easier to stick to my New Year's resolution by providing me with motivation on a platter in your gorgeous magazine, with very few high in calorie temptations.

Dr Rajul Matkar



There's a reason why people say 'New Year, new start', and the January issue of BBC Good Food Middle East proved just that. It refreshed my mind after the heavy holiday period, to realising how important it is to look after your body. I also enjoyed the fact that although the party season is over, you still included recipes perfect for a garden gathering – all healthy and super tasty. I'm having a BBQ this weekend and plan on treating my guests to the menu. Thank you BBC Good Food ME.

Sandra Downs



Getting the magazine last month came as a great help as I've recently started to include healthy snacks in my children's lifestyle. I tried the quinoa tabbuleh and the kids absolutely loved it.

All the dishes from the clean and lean 3-day diet feature were mouthwatering and even my daughter has been inspired to make these dishes as they are easy to make and delicious. I hope everyone found clean eating inspiration in this issue!

Syeda Romana



I'd just like to say that I loved your January cover! I am Portuguese, however, spent a lot of time in Spain growing up and seeing the Spanish roast fish with broad beans and chorizo really reminded me of being back home. I picked up the issue and went home to make it that night. Delicious, thank you!

Maria Goncalves

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with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of BBC Good Food ME!

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Culinary Q&A

Expert advice for in and out of the kitchen





Darren Velvick,
head chef at The Croft, Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites, and the former patron chef of Table9, addresses your culinary dilemmas.

Q. I want to cook a romantic dinner at home, what dish would you suggest making that isn't too challenging, but still impressive?

I would not cook anything too heavy, so I would steer towards fish for the main course and not meat. Salmon is a great fish and fairly easy to cook, with some grilled asparagus, a nice tomato and sweetcorn salsa, served with some prawns or scallops within the dish too. Keep it light and fresh. You don't want to be feeling sickly after the meal. You can't go wrong with a few fresh oysters as a starter, they are easy to prepare and are not too filling. I spice mine up with an Asian style dressing instead of the classic shallot red wine vinegar mix. For dessert it has to be chocolate and strawberries. Prepare a nice chocolate mouse with strawberry compote, which can be made in the day and set up in the fridge so you don't have to worry about it in the evening.

Q. I recently bought a NutriBullet but don't know what to put in it. What are the best ingredients for making a perfect, healthy smoothie?

I love the Nutribullet! A favourite of mine that we make at home is a great banana, chocolate and honey smoothie, using all organic produce. To try it at home, simply add the following ingredients in to the NutriBullet and blend everything together: 1 large ripe banana or avocado; 1.5tsp raw cocoa powder; 1.5tsp tahini; 1.5tsp honey; 600ml raw almond milk or yoghurt; 2 ice cubes - and there you have a perfect smoothie.

Q. My sponge cake keeps turning out dry. What am I doing wrong?

Basically you are over mixing the ingredients, and then overcooking the sponge, when whisking the eggs with the sugar try and get as much air in as possible, then fold in the sieved flour again trying to keep the air inside. I always bake my cakes at 180C until the skewer comes out clean, tip the sponge out of the mould straight away and allow to cool on a wire rack.



Nutrition Q&A

I want to make a sweet treat for my partner on Valentine's but we're both on a health-kick, so I need to keep it light. What dessert can I make that is yummy, but nutritious?

Make raw nutty truffles. They are easy to make and the variations are endless. In a food processor, combine nuts and dried fruit of your choice, then top it up with little bit of maple or agave syrup. Prunes and walnuts or dates and almonds are always great combinations. The texture should be quite dense and slightly sticky. Shape the dough into balls and cover it in cocoa, almond flour or matcha tea.

I've been feeling bloated recently. Which foods should I avoid to prevent this?

First, think of the dishes you have eaten in the past week – if it was something unusual. Bloated feeling can also be a sign of gluten intolerance, so try to cut down on white bread and pasta. When it comes to vegetables, the usual suspects are cabbage, broccoli and kale. Apples and legumes can also make you bloated. Instead of cutting these healthy ingredients from your menu, combine them with those that help reduce bloating, such as bananas, probiotic yoghurt or fennel seeds.



Tomas Reger,
executive chef at Intersect by Lexus, DIFC and founder of Tomas Reger Food Consultants, tackles your nutrition dilemmas.

Compiled by SOPHIE MCCARRICK

Flavours *of the* month

Here is what's hot and happening around town this month.

New on the block

Senara, Palm Jumeriah

A homegrown concept dedicated to fusing the UAE's staple seafood cuisine with traditional British flair. It's the latest seafood bistro to open in Dubai, boasting sunset views from The Palm. Signature dishes include fresh catch of the day, buckets of muscles, oysters, lobster linguini, and not forgetting the famous fish and chips. *Call 04-4516460.*

Cipriani Dubai, DIFC

Due to make its Dubai debut, the established Italian restaurant Cipriani is set to open in this quarter. The new outlet will feature high gloss wooden railings, brown leather chairs and polished steel finishes – reminiscent of a Venetian luxury yacht, with menu classics including carpaccio alla cipriani, baked tagliolini, and vanilla meringue.

Nola Social, Armada BlueBay Hotel, JLT

This New Orleans-inspired eatery offers something a little different, and just in time for Mardi Gras, the venue will play host to the festivities until February 9 – in true Nola spirit. Specials include Mardi Gras salad, blackened chicken with dirty rice and King Cakes. *Call 04-3998155.*

Brasserie 2.0, Le Royal Méridien Beach Resort & Spa

A perfect place for Friday brunch, this brand new all-day dining restaurant, bar and terrace offers something for everyone. From live cooking islands, a juice and shake bar, and outdoor BBQ, Brasserie 2.0 will serve dishes from all over the world. *Call 04-3998155.*



Senara, Palm Jumeirah

Compiled by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs SUPPLIED



Valentine's Day is on February 14!

Bistro Des Arts, The Address Dubai Marina

Featuring an intimate, romantic ambience reminiscent of the famous city of love itself, Bistro Des Arts will transport you on a heartfelt journey of French culinary highlights carefully selected and served with passion and pleasure. *Call 04-5511576.*

La Parilla, Jumeirah Beach Hotel

Indulge in Latin American cuisine on Valentine's and choose between a three-course set menu with a glass of bubbles indoors, or opt for one of five exclusive tables on the outdoor terrace where a five-course menu paired with a welcome drink and a bottle of Moët will be served. From carne asada, grilled octopus and lobster to ceviches and decadent churros con chocolate, this will be a night to remember. Priced from Dhs900 per couple. *Call 04-4323232.*

Stay by Yannick Alléno, One&Only The Palm

With three Michelin-stars under his belt, French Chef Yannick Alléno has launched his new Food&Extractions Pairing menu at Stay, where tailor-made vegetable and fruit beverages are created to complement each dish. An example pairing includes red mullet fish cooked with Moroccan Atlas olive oil paired with an extraction of onion, celeriac, mushrooms and artichoke. *Call 04-4401030.*



The Hide, Al Qasr Hotel

Enjoy a three-course romantic feast for two with or without grape pairing this Valentine's. If you and your partner are meat lovers, this one's for you – you'll also receive a complimentary gift of a rose and polaroid picture to take home. Prices start from Dhs595 per couple, or Dhs795 per couple with grape pairing. *Call 04-4323232.*



Amwaj Rotana, Jumeirah Beach Residence

Start your evening of romance with an al fresco 'Sunset Brunch' out on the terrace of Amwaj Rotana's Italian restaurant, Rosso, or the American-Japanese outlet, Benihana, which will be focusing on chocolate all month long. While the sun is setting, expect performances by a live violinist and music to suit the mood. Prices start from Dhs235 per person to Dhs660 per couple with house beverages. *Call 04-4282000.*

Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi

Enjoy an unforgettable evening starting by the poolside of Dusit Breeze with mocktails and cocktails before choosing your preferred dining venue. Enjoy Thai cuisine at Benjarong (Dhs199 per person), or Western flavours at The Capital Grill (Dhs250 per person), where a four course menu will be prepared in each outlet, especially for Valentine's Day. *Call 04-4282000.*

Novikov Dubai, Sheraton Grand Hotel

This Valentine's, turn up the romance with a specially designed menu including half a dozen of oysters, caviar blinis, carabineros sushi, yuzu sorbet, field greens with black truffle, Japanese wagyu beef and lobster, completed with a delicious raspberry mousse and white chocolate. To top it off, sip on a bottle of Laurent Perrier Rose fizz with your meal, all for Dhs1,950 per couple. *Call 04-38 888744.*

Sicilia, Mövenpick Hotel Ibn Battuta Gate

Stir up the romance between you and your loved one with Chef Stefano's elegant and contemporary Valentine's Day menu in a warm and rustic ambiance. Featured dishes will include risotto acquerello, plus pink shrimps and zucchini gnocchetti. Priced from Dhs299 per couple or Dhs399 with house beverages. *Call 04-4445613.* >>



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ingredients

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Purobeach, Jebel Ali JA Golf Resort

If you're looking for somewhere to relax on a Saturday afternoon, where better to do so than at the hottest new beach club in town. Offering a BBQ-style brunch from 1pm to 4pm every week, you can indulge in freshly grilled meats, fish and seafood (including delicious jumbo prawns!), a fresh salad bar, cooking stations and various pizzas or flatbreads – not forgetting the unlimited cocktails or mocktails. All for Dhs300, the brunch allows you to sit or lay poolside, on the beach or on the restaurant's terrace, where a live saxophone player compliments the sounds of soul and retro house music. And, you won't need to worry about rushing off after 4pm – all brunch guests are invited to stick around and relax as the sun sets. *Call 05-07013303.*

Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Evening chic



Reviewed by Sophie McCarrick
Editor of BBC Good Food Middle East, lover of all things food and a keen seeker of new dining experiences.



Where: Play Restaurant & Lounge, H Hotel, Sheikh Zayed Road

What's it like: Sleek and sexy comes to mind when you enter chef Reif Othman's (ex-Zuma chef) latest restaurant. With dark, contemporary interiors the venue sends off a very cool, seductive allure; it's borderline nightclub – only the music is calm and played at a respectable level so you're easily able to hear each other speak. With breathtaking views of downtown Dubai's skyline from the 36th floor – this is definitely one of the most impressive restaurant's I've seen launch lately. My dining partner and I soon learn the menu – which comprises countless pages of tempting dishes – is designed to deliver the sharing-style experience. Although it's tough not to get carried away, we opted for dishes including wagyu beef carpaccio, salmon and tuna tartare, caviar cornets, snails in the garden (pictured), fish in the bag, and lamb chops – all of which we devoured. The unique flavours and dish presentations really stood out for me – the cuisine being labeled as 'Mediterrasian', a name our waiter informs has been patented by Play. For dessert I'd highly recommend the poached peach and pear dish, it's light, absolutely scrumptious and portioned perfectly. Play's the type of place I feel is best to visit over the weekend, where you can afford to stay out a little later and enjoy carefully crafted cocktails at the bar or lounge after dinner, which stays open until 3am. Chef Reif really does a fantastic job of seamlessly marrying Mediterranean and Asian cuisines and I have no doubt this venue will fast become a favourite amongst Dubai's hip and trendy crowd.

If you want to go: Around Dhs400 per person for three-courses, excluding beverages. Call 04-3364444.

Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWER



Where: Hakkasan Dubai, Jumeirah Emirates Towers

What's it like: A perfect destination to visit while the weather is still cool; the beautiful Hakkasan terrace is idyllic and transports you to a quaint Japanese-like garden, with soft water features and large slate pathways – not forgetting the greenery, which is always a nice surprise in Dubai. We're here to check out chef Andy's latest menu, specifically designed for the outside terrace. Greeted by our extremely friendly waiter, we're given a run down of the Cantonese menu to learn it's made up of smaller portioned dishes, ideal for nibbling or sharing. To begin, we opt for the hakka steamed dum sum platter, which includes individual pieces filled with the likes of scallops, smoked wagyu and seabass, plus the five spice crab meat roll and crispy prawn fitters with truffle – the menu isn't divided into starters and mains – so we order a couple of dishes at a time, not to over do it, however, portions aren't excessive so don't worry. Next we tried chicken skewers in satay sauce, followed by my personal favourite of the evening, Jasmine tea smoked wagyu beef ribs, which were divine and melted in the mouth – they came bite sized too, so there were no inconvenient sticky fingers to deal with. To finish up, we were pleased to find a cocktail list complementing the terrace menu, showcasing mixes such as the lychee martini and a plum sour. For a stylish evening out with friends, paired with sophisticated dining, this is a great one to try.

If you want to go: Around Dhs200 per person for a range of dishes, excluding beverages. Call 04-3848484.



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Salmon noodles with sushi ginger

IN THIS SECTION



✳ Get creative with root veggies to create something magical in the kitchen, **P18**



✳ Make your weeknight suppers hassle free with these recipes, **P24**

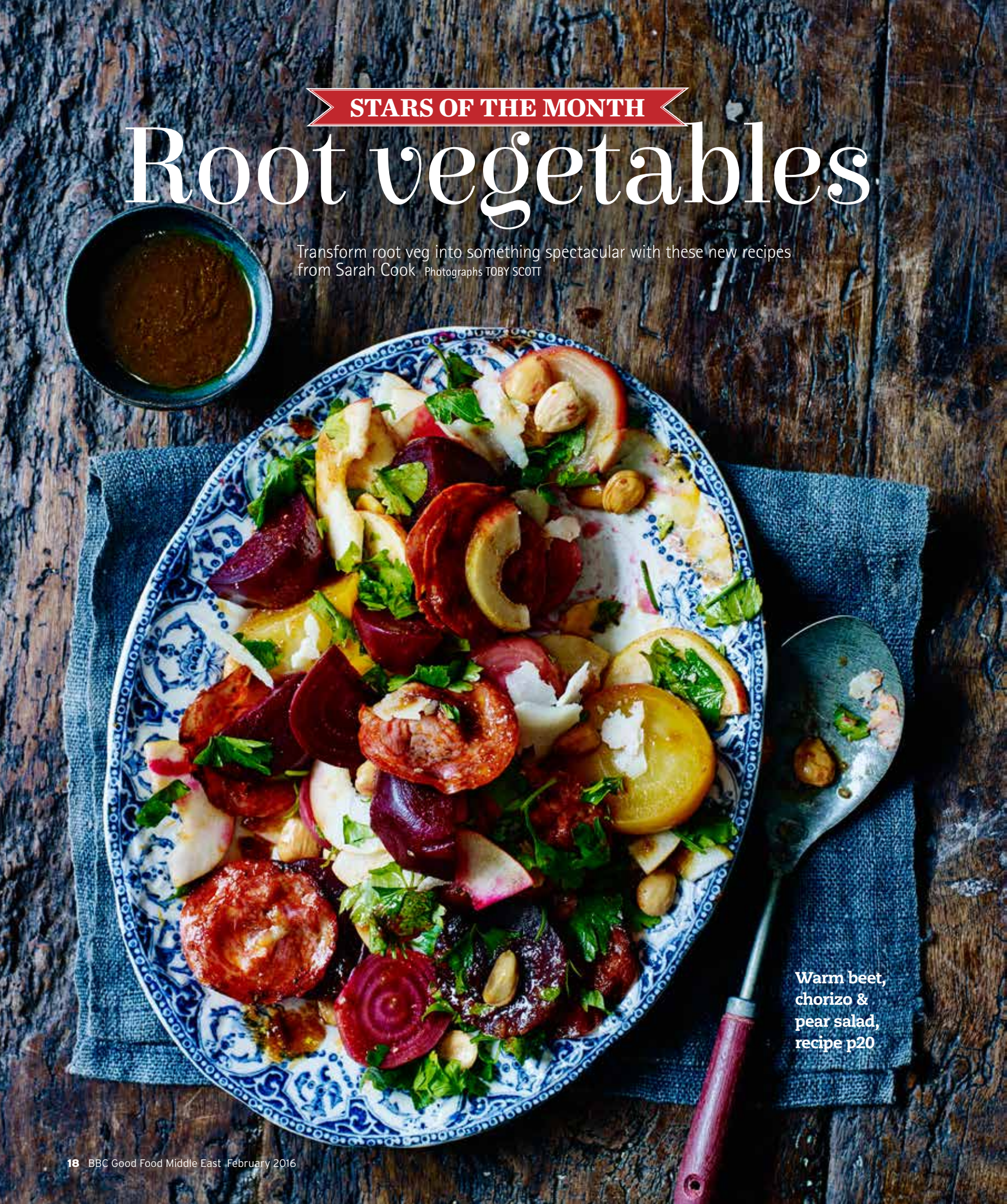


✳ Cook up a romantic dinner for someone special with this menu, **P34**

STARS OF THE MONTH

Root vegetables

Transform root veg into something spectacular with these new recipes from Sarah Cook Photographs TOBY SCOTT



Warm beet, chorizo & pear salad, recipe p20


Beef, leek & swede Cumberland pies, recipe p20



Warm beet, chorizo & pear salad

SERVES 4 as a main or 6 as a starter or side
PREP 15 mins **COOK** 55 mins
EASY | P | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | 2 OF 5 A DAY

1kg mixed beets, leaves trimmed
200g chorizo, skinned and thickly sliced
100g whole blanched almonds (use Marcona if it's a special occasion)
2 tbsp membrillo (quince paste)
4 tbsp Sherry vinegar
1 tbsp lemon juice, plus an extra squeeze
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 large or 2 small firm pears (I used Red Williams)
small pack parsley, leaves picked and roughly torn
50g Manchego, shaved

1 Put the beets in a large pan of water (if you have a mix of colours, cook in separate pans as the colours will bleed). Bring the water to a boil, cover and leave to simmer – about 20-40 mins, depending on the size of the beets. Use a skewer or small sharp knife to check that they're tender in the centre (try not to poke too often or they'll bleed all their juices into the water).
2 Drain the beets and leave to cool in a colander. When cool enough to handle, peel away the skins, root and stalks, then roughly chop or slice the beets.
3 Put the chorizo in a cold frying pan and fry over a medium heat until crisp – you should collect lots of oil in the pan. Lift out the chorizo with a slotted spoon and keep warm. Tip in the almonds and fry quickly until just turning brown on the edges. Scoop out with a slotted spoon and place on kitchen paper to dry.
4 Make the dressing by melting the membrillo in the pan with the chorizo oil, Sherry vinegar and 1 tbsp lemon juice. Mix in the olive oil and season.
5 Core and thinly slice the pear, toss with a little lemon juice to stop it browning, then arrange on a platter with the beets, chorizo and almonds. Toss together with the dressing, if you like, or serve the dressing on the side. Sprinkle over the parsley and Manchego and serve immediately.

PER SERVING 568 kcals • fat 33g • saturates 10g • carbs 37g • sugars 34g • fibre 9g • protein 24g • salt 1.7g

Tip

This salad is wonderful to eat just as it is – serve with some crusty bread. It also makes a great side dish for a paprika-rubbed roast chicken or hake fillets.

You could also serve this for a starter, topped with some fried quail's eggs.



Beef, leek & swede Cumberland pie

A Cumberland is just a cheesy crumb away from a cottage pie, but that extra layer of salty crunch is always worth it. Swede adds an earthy, golden twist to the standard spud mash and matches brilliantly with sweet leeks.

SERVES 6 **PREP** 45 mins **COOK** 3 hrs
EASY | P | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | IRON | IRON

3 leeks (or 2 if large), white part diced, green part sliced and kept separate
1 large carrot, finely chopped
2 celery sticks, finely chopped
1 tbsp butter
1 tbsp rapeseed or vegetable oil
1kg good-quality beef mince (a little fat adds flavour and tenderises, so try a 10% mix rather than super-lean)
200g unsmoked bacon lardons
3 tbsp plain flour
5 thyme sprigs
2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp Marmite
1.2 litres beef stock
FOR THE TOPPING
1kg swede (about 2 large), peeled and chopped into chunks
350g floury potatoes, chopped into chunks
25g butter, plus a few knobs
100ml milk
a little freshly grated nutmeg
25g mature cheddar, grated
25g fresh breadcrumbs

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Put the leek whites, carrot and celery in a flameproof casserole dish with the butter, oil and a pinch of salt, and soften, without colouring, over a gentle heat.
2 Meanwhile, brown the mince in a non-stick frying pan. Cook in batches to keep it brown and avoid it going grey and soggy. If you've used a lean mince, you may need to add a drop of oil. Break up the mince well with a wooden spoon as you go.
3 When the veg is soft, stir in the bacon lardons, turn up the heat a little and cook until everything is golden. Stir in the mince, followed by the flour, 3 thyme sprigs, Worcestershire sauce and Marmite. Gradually stir in the stock and bring everything to a simmer, then cover and transfer to the oven. Cook for 2 hrs until the sauce is thickened and rich, and the beef tender, removing the lid and stirring in the leek greens halfway through.
4 While the beef bakes, put the swede and potato into two separate pans. Cover with cold water, bring to the boil, then simmer until tender – about 20 mins. Drain both well, then tip back into their pans over a low heat to steam-dry for a few mins. When both (but particularly the swede) look dry, combine them in one pan with the butter, milk, nutmeg and lots of seasoning. Mash until smooth.
5 Transfer the mince to individual dishes or one baking dish (or leave in the casserole if you prefer, discarding the thyme sprigs). Cover with the mash, using a fork to fluff up the top. Rub the cheddar into the breadcrumbs with the leaves from the remaining thyme sprigs and plenty of freshly ground black pepper. Sprinkle this mixture over the mash, dot with small knobs of butter, then increase the temperature to 200C/180C fan and bake for 30 mins until golden and crisp on top. Can be made ahead and chilled, or frozen and defrosted. Bake for an extra 10-15 mins until the sauce is bubbling.

PER SERVING 659 kcals • fat 36g • saturates 16g • carbs 28g • sugars 8g • fibre 6g • protein 52g • salt 2.5g »



Rainbow bhajis with coriander cream, recipe p22



Rainbow bhajis with coriander cream

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 30 mins **COOK** 20 mins A LITTLE EFFORT V

140g carrot, grated
2 tsp nigella seeds
100g parsnip, peeled into shavings with a potato peeler
2 tbsp desiccated coconut
small pack coriander, stalks only, finely chopped (use the leaves below)
140g beetroot, half grated, half cut into fine matchsticks
2 tsp grated ginger
1 litre sunflower oil, for frying
lemon and lime wedges, to serve
FOR THE BATTER
4 tbsp balti paste
250g flour (or plain flour)
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp each cumin seeds, ground cumin, ground coriander and garam masala
¼ tsp hot chilli powder
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
FOR THE CORIANDER CREAM
350g coconut yogurt (I used Coyo)
small pack coriander, leaves picked
zest and juice 2 limes

1 To make the batter, stir the balti paste into 250ml cold water. Mix the flour, baking powder and spices in a mixing bowl, make a well in the centre, then pour in the balti water and gradually stir together to a smooth batter. Stir in the onions, then divide between 3 bowls.
2 Stir the carrot and nigella seeds into one batch of batter, the parsnip, coconut and chopped coriander stalks into another, and the beetroot and ginger into the third.
3 Make the coriander cream by whizzing half the coconut yogurt with the coriander leaves and lime juice until well blitzed and green. Stir through the lime zest and remaining yogurt, then keep cold until serving.
4 Heat the oil in a deep pan or a non-stick wok to 180C or until a piece of bread browns in 20 secs. Starting with the parsnip and ending with the beetroot, add spoonfuls of the mixture to the oil, a few at a time, and cook for a few mins, turning occasionally until evenly browned and crispy – about 4 mins. Lift out onto kitchen paper with a slotted spoon, sprinkle with a little salt and keep warm in a low oven while you cook the rest.
5 Serve the hot bhajis with the coriander cream, and lemon and lime wedges for squeezing over.

PER SERVING (8) 304 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 8g • carbs 28g • sugars 7g • fibre 6g • protein 7g • salt 0.6g

Tip

Widely used in savoury Indian dishes, gram flour (also known as besan or chickpea flour) is a fine yellow gluten-free flour made from ground chickpeas. Find it in the supermarket world food aisle or in your local health foods shop.

Carrot cake cookies

Everyone's favourite cake in a cookie – genius!

MAKES 14 **PREP** 30 mins plus chilling **COOK** 20 mins A LITTLE EFFORT

140g cream cheese
140g icing sugar, plus 3 tbsp
½ tsp vanilla extract
350g plain flour, plus extra for dusting your hands
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp mixed spice
140g butter, softened
140g light brown soft sugar
1 egg, beaten
200g carrot, finely grated
zest and juice 1 orange
3 tbsp finely chopped walnuts

1 Mix together the cream cheese, 3 tbsp icing sugar and the vanilla extract in a bowl, then put in the freezer to firm up for 30 mins.
2 Meanwhile, combine the flour, baking powder and spices in a bowl. In a larger bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until creamy. Beat in the egg, followed by the carrot. Tip in the dry ingredients and mix to form a dough.
3 Line a baking sheet with baking parchment. Dust your hands with a little flour, then divide the dough into 14 balls and place on the sheet. Use the palm of your hand to flatten each one to a thin circle. Add 1 tsp of the cream cheese mixture to the centre of each one, then carefully wrap the dough up and around the filling to seal it in, pinching the top and rolling back into a rough ball to stop any of the filling leaking out.
4 When all the balls are shaped, use your palm to flatten them slightly, then put in the fridge to chill for 30 mins. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan.
5 Bake the cookies for 20 mins until golden and crisp. Remove from the oven, let them firm up on the tray for 10-15 mins, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.
6 Mix the icing sugar with the orange juice to a drizzling consistency. Drizzle all over the cookies, sprinkle with the walnuts and orange zest, then allow to set. Best eaten on the day they are made, but will keep in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

PER COOKIE 336 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 9g • carbs 43g • sugars 24g • fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.4g GI

Food styling SARAH COOK | Styling LUIS PERAL



Carrot cake cookies

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Recipes KATY GREENWOOD Photographs STUART OVENDEN

Mexican bean soup with crispy feta tortillas

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins

EASY V LOW FAT CALCIUM FIBRE 2 OF 5 A DAY

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 heaped tbsp chipotle paste
500g carton passata
500ml vegetable stock
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
400g can black beans, drained and rinsed
200g feta
2 garlic cloves, crushed
4 large or 8 small flour tortillas
small pack coriander, roughly chopped, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion over a medium heat for 10 mins to soften. Stir in the chipotle paste, passata, stock and all the beans. Season, bring to the boil, then gently simmer for 5 mins.

2 Meanwhile, in a bowl crumble the feta and mix with the garlic. Divide between the tortillas, spreading over one half of each, then sprinkle over a little pepper. Fold the uncovered side over and press down. Heat a dry frying pan and cook the tortillas on both sides for a couple of mins until the feta has melted and the tortillas are crisp.

3 Divide the soup between bowls, scatter with coriander and serve with the tortillas.

PER SERVING 551 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 7g • carbs 73g • sugars 12g • fibre 14g • protein 24g • salt 3.7g »

Dhs8 per serving



Food styling KATY GREENWOOD | Styling SARAH BIRKS



Chicken tandoori wraps

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 30 mins EASY 1 OF 5 A DAY

2 fat green chillies, deseeded and roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
50g ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
250g Greek-style natural yoghurt
small pack of coriander, leaves only
1 tsp curry powder
8 skinless chicken thigh fillets, cut into chunks
½ red onion, thinly sliced
4 tomatoes, deseeded and sliced
chapatis, to serve

1 In the small bowl of a food processor, whizz the chillies, garlic and ginger until finely chopped. Add the yoghurt and three-quarters of the coriander, whizz until well mixed, then season. Weigh out 175g of the yoghurt mixture into a large bowl, stir in the curry powder, then add the chicken and mix well to coat.
2 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Line a baking tray with foil, spread the chicken out on it and bake for 30 mins on the top shelf.
3 Meanwhile, toss the remaining yoghurt mixture with the onion, tomatoes and remaining coriander. Divide the chicken and salad between some warm chapatis, roll up and serve.

PER SERVING 220 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 5g • carbs 9g • sugars 7g • fibre 2g • protein 24g • salt 0.4g



Cod, cauliflower & chorizo mornay

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 50 mins
EASY P CALCIUM 1 OF 5 A DAY

1 small head of cauliflower, cut into florets
½ chorizo ring (about 100g), roughly chopped
25g butter
3 tbsp plain flour
500ml milk
140g Gruyère, grated
500g cod loin, chopped into large chunks
50g fresh breadcrumbs
½ small pack parsley, finely chopped

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Bring a large pan of water to the boil and blanch the cauliflower for 3-4 mins until al dente. Drain and set aside.
2 Heat a non-stick frying pan and cook the chorizo for a couple of mins to brown, then remove from the pan with a slotted spoon, leaving the oil behind. Melt the butter in the pan, then add the flour to make a roux. Pour in the milk gradually, whisking constantly, until smooth. Add the Gruyère, stir until melted, then season.
3 Put the cauliflower in a baking dish (or divide between individual dishes) with the chorizo and cod. Spoon over the cheese sauce and sprinkle with the breadcrumbs and parsley. Bake for 30-40 mins until the top is golden.

PER SERVING 546 kcals • fat 27g • saturates 15g • carbs 28g • sugars 8g • fibre 3g • protein 46g • salt 1.6g



Thai green pork lettuce cups

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins
EASY P FOLATE 2 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

1 tbsp sesame oil
500g pork mince
1 tbsp green curry paste
1 red onion, finely chopped
juice 1 lime
1 tbsp fish sauce
½ small pack mint, leaves only, roughly chopped
½ small pack coriander, leaves only, roughly chopped
4 Little Gem lettuce, leaves separated
rice, to serve (optional)

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the pork for 8-10 mins or until cooked through. Stir in the green curry paste and 2 tbsp water, then cook for 1-2 mins.
2 Remove from the heat and stir in the red onion, lime juice, fish sauce and herbs. Spoon the pork into the lettuce leaves and serve with rice, if you like.

PER SERVING 298 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 5g • carbs 7g • sugars 6g • fibre 3g • protein 27g • salt 1.1g



Korean-style fried rice

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins
EASY FOLATE IRON 2 OF 5 A DAY

3 tbsp sesame oil
350g rump steak
250g mushrooms (we used chestnut), sliced
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
200g beansprouts
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp chilli sauce (we used sriracha), plus extra to serve
500g cooked rice (200g uncooked)
bunch spring onions, sliced
4 eggs

1 Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan over a high heat, season the steaks and cook for 2-3 mins each side. Remove from the pan and leave to rest.
2 Heat 1 tbsp oil in a separate frying pan, stir-fry the mushrooms until softened, then stir in the garlic, beansprouts, soy and chilli sauce. Cook for another 2 mins, then add the cooked rice and heat through. Stir in the spring onions and keep warm.
3 Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in the pan that you fried the steak in. Add the eggs and fry until done to your liking. Slice the steaks and spoon the rice into bowls. Top each one with the sliced steak, an egg and a drizzle of chilli sauce.

PER SERVING 530 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 7g • carbs 41g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 38g • salt 1.9g



Cheesy ham & broccoli pasta

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY P CALCIUM FIBRE VIT C 1 OF 5 A DAY

300g pasta (we used conchiglie)
1 head of broccoli, cut into small florets
1 tbsp oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
250g ham, cut into chunks (get a nice thick slice from the deli counter)
300ml pot double cream
1 tbsp English mustard
140g mature cheddar, grated

1 Bring a large pan of water to the boil and cook the pasta following pack instructions, adding the broccoli florets to the pan for the final 4 mins. Drain and set aside.
2 Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion for 5 mins to soften, then stir in the garlic and cook for 1 min more. Stir in the ham, cream and mustard, then bring to the boil. Add the pasta and broccoli, then stir in the cheese, coating everything in the sauce.

PER SERVING 902 kcals • fat 62g • saturates 34g • carbs 46g • sugars 6g • fibre 5g • protein 37g • salt 2.9g



Swedish-style sausage meatballs

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY P

450g pork sausages, skins removed
1 tbsp oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
300ml tub half-fat crème fraîche
½ small pack dill, finely chopped
mashed potato, to serve

1 Roll the sausagemeat into 20 balls the size of cherry tomatoes. Heat the oil in a frying pan and brown the meatballs for 8-10 mins.
2 Stir in the garlic, mustard and crème fraîche, bubble to thicken for about 10 mins, then stir in the dill. Grind over some black pepper just before serving, with mashed potato on the side.

PER SERVING 506 kcals • fat 43g • saturates 18g • carbs 14g • sugars 6g • fibre none • protein 16g • salt 3.0g GF



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Lebanese supper for two

Discover the flavours and variety of Lebanese food at home with these authentic meze recipes from restaurateur Tony Kitous

Photographs SAM STOWELL


Aubergine salad, recipe p32
Lamb kofta stew with cauliflower & chickpeas, recipe p30



Algerian-born Tony Kitous moved to London when he was 18, and opened his first restaurant four years later. He wanted to create a friendly, accessible and value-for-money 'canteen'.

The result was Comptoir Libanais, meaning Lebanese counter (*comptoirlibanais.com*). Tony has been a key influencer in the Lebanese and Middle Eastern food scene in the UK and has written two successful cookbooks, *Comptoir Libanais and Comptoir Libanais Express*, both published by Preface. He is currently working on his third book.

'My fascination with food began when I was a little kid. My mum was my accomplice – she helped me make things like sardine sandwiches and lemonade in our modest kitchen, then I'd venture out to the nearby football stadium, set up a stall on the pavement, and sell to the football fans. That was my first experience of combining homemade food and drink with friendly hospitality – something that has become an integral part of my life.

My childhood is filled with memories of watching in awe as my mum and aunts rustled up a huge spread of food, and the delight in devouring the dishes they had prepared along with my brothers, sister and our cousins.

Lebanon is half Christian, half Muslim; half city people and half mountain people; half people looking to the east and half looking to the west, all living in harmony. Geographically, it's at a crossroads. If you look at it on a map, it's like the belly of the Eastern Mediterranean. So many different civilizations and influences have left their mark on the tastes, traditions and politics, and all of these things translate into a very diverse cuisine. Food for the Lebanese is a very important expression of affection, love, emotion and hospitality and, when you go to people's homes, they always want you to see the table full.

This menu is an easy introduction to the food that I love. The perfect meze is essentially about generosity. Meze fill the table, so you're free from the formality of courses and can put different elements on a single table – there are no rules, no conventions, and you get to eat a bit of everything.'



Lamb kofta stew with cauliflower & chickpeas

This is great for evenings in. The kofta meatballs are full of flavour, and the chickpeas give the dish a great texture.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 30 mins **COOK** 45 mins

EASY | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | IRON | 4 OF 5 A DAY

FOR THE SAUCE

2 tsp olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, chopped
400g can chopped tomatoes
2 tsp tomato purée
500ml hot lamb stock
½ small cauliflower, broken into small florets
½ x 400g can chickpeas (save the rest for the kofta balls)
½ bunch coriander, leaves only, to serve

FOR THE KOFTA BALLS

250g minced lamb
1 small onion, finely chopped
small pack coriander, finely chopped
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp smoked paprika
½ x 400g can chickpeas (from above), drained and crushed

1 First, make the sauce. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the onion for around 10 mins until starting to soften and caramelise. Stir in the garlic and cook for about 1 min, then add the tomatoes and tomato purée and stir again. Season well and pour in 400ml of the stock. Cover and bring to the boil, then simmer over a very low heat while you make the kofta balls.

2 Add all the ingredients for the kofta balls to a large mixing bowl, and mix with your hands until all the ingredients are combined. Spoon out golf ball-sized pieces of the mixture, and roll into balls using your hands.

3 Give the sauce a good stir. Drop the kofta balls on top, then add the cauliflower florets and the rest of the chickpeas, pushing them just under the liquid. Simmer for 25-30 mins or until the kofta balls are tender, adding the remaining 100ml of stock, if necessary. Scatter over the coriander and serve.

PER SERVING energy 613 kcals • fat 25g • saturates 9g • carbs 33g • sugars 12g • fibre 12g • protein 57g • salt 1.2g



Halloumi with tomatoes & pomegranate molasses

This is very easy and quick to make but tastes delicious. The mix of the halloumi and pomegranate creates a lovely salty-sweet combination, which is complemented by the mint.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 8 mins

EASY | V | CALCIUM | GLUTEN FREE

1-2 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp za'atar (see p78)
225g pack halloumi, sliced
5 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
handful mint leaves, to serve
1-2 tsp pomegranate seeds, to serve

1 Pour the olive oil into a medium bowl, add the za'atar and stir to combine. Add the halloumi and toss in the mixture until well coated.

2 Heat a large griddle pan. Place the halloumi in the pan and cook for 1-2 mins, then turn over and cook for a further 1-2 mins until golden brown on both sides. After turning the halloumi, add the cherry tomatoes and move them around the pan quickly so they cook all over.

3 Transfer the halloumi and tomatoes to a plate, then drizzle over the pomegranate molasses and serve with the mint leaves and pomegranate seeds scattered over.

PER SERVING energy 424 kcals • fat 35g • saturates 19g • carbs 3g • sugars 3g • fibre 1g • protein 24g • salt 3.5g»



Watermelon & orange blossom lemonade, recipe p32



Courgette & tahini dip

SERVES 2
PREP 10 mins plus cooling **COOK** 20 mins

EASY | V | FOLATE | VIT C | 1 OF 5 A DAY | GOOD 4 YOU | GLUTEN FREE

2 large courgettes, washed
1 small garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp tahini
juice ½ lemon
1 tbsp Greek yoghurt
handful of mint, leaves picked and chopped
½ tsp olive oil, to serve

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Wrap the whole courgettes in foil, then put in the oven and roast for 20 mins or until soft when pricked with a fork. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.
2 Put the courgettes in a food processor, with the garlic and blend until it has a fluffy texture. Add the tahini and lemon juice and season, then blitz again. Transfer to a bowl, then stir through the yoghurt and a little of the mint. Drizzle with olive oil and scatter over the remaining mint to serve.

PER SERVING energy 121 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 2g • carbs 5g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 7g • salt 0.2g



Za'atar croutons

SERVES 2 **PREP** 5 mins
COOK 30-40 mins

EASY | V

2 round pitta breads
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp za'atar spice mix (see right)

1 Heat oven to 110C/90C fan. Put the pittas on top of each other on a chopping board. With a bread knife, cut them into quarters, then cut each quarter in half again (so you end up with 16 equal-sized triangles).
2 Add the olive oil, a pinch of salt and the za'atar to a small bowl, and stir to combine. Using a pastry brush or your finger, coat the pittas on both sides with the mixture, then put them on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 30-40 mins until crisp.

PER SERVING energy 304 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 2g • carbs 39g • sugars 2g • fibre 2g • protein 8g • salt 0.8g



Aubergine salad

SERVES 2 **PREP** 40 mins
COOK 45-55 mins

EASY | V | LOW FAT | FIBRE | VIT C | 2 OF 5 A DAY | GOOD 4 YOU | GLUTEN FREE

1 medium aubergine
1-2 spring onions, chopped
4 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
½ small red pepper, deseeded and finely diced
½ small green pepper, deseeded and finely diced
1 tbsp mint, chopped
seeds from ½ pomegranate, to serve
FOR THE DRESSING
juice ½ lemon
½ small red chilli (deseeded if you don't like it too hot), finely chopped (optional)
½ tbsp pomegranate molasses
1 small garlic clove, crushed
1½ tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and line a baking tray with foil. Prick the aubergine with a sharp knife to prevent it from exploding, then put it on the prepared tray and roast for 45-55 mins until the skin is wrinkled and it is very soft.
2 While the aubergine is roasting, make the dressing. Mix together the lemon juice, chilli, if using, the pomegranate molasses, garlic and olive oil in a bowl. Season and set aside.
3 When the aubergine is cool enough to handle, peel and place it in a colander. Press down on it very gently over a bowl to allow the juices to run out, then transfer the aubergine to a serving plate and cut into large pieces. Dress quickly with half of the dressing, then add the spring onions, cherry tomatoes and peppers to the plate. Pour over the remaining dressing and mix with your hands or a spoon to coat. Serve scattered with mint, pomegranate seeds and more olive oil drizzled over.

PER SERVING energy 178 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 2g • carbs 14g • sugars 10g • fibre 10g • protein 4g • salt 0.2g



Watermelon & orange blossom lemonade

MAKES 4 **PREP** 10 mins
NO COOK

EASY | LOW FAT | VIT C | 1 OF 5 A DAY | GLUTEN FREE even as ice lollies

½ watermelon (about 2.5kg unprepared weight, or 1.3kg, deseeded flesh only)
4-6 tsp golden caster sugar, or to taste
juice 2-3 lemons
2 tsp orange blossom water
crushed ice, to serve

1 Cut up the watermelon and remove the skin and most of the seeds. Put in a food processor with the sugar, lemon juice and orange blossom water and blitz together, adding more sugar to taste.
2 Strain through a sieve to remove the remaining seeds, then pour into a jug. Add a few spoonfuls of crushed ice, pour into glasses, and serve.

PER SERVING energy 225 kcals • fat 1g • saturates 0g • carbs 49g • sugars 43g • fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.1g

A guide to Lebanese ingredients

All these can be bought from larger supermarkets or independent food shops.

- **Pomegranate molasses** is made by boiling down pomegranate juice until it reaches a consistency similar to maple syrup. It's tart and sweet at the same time, and this balance depends on the ripeness of the fruit used to make it. It can enhance other flavours in both sweet and savoury dishes.
- **Za'atar** can cause a little confusion. It's the term for the Middle Eastern spice mix made from a heady combination of herbs, spices and seeds; however, it's also the name of a herb itself. As with so much Middle Eastern cooking, there are many regional variations.
- **Tahini**, a paste made by grinding sesame seeds, can also be referred to as 'tahina', depending on the region.
- **Olive oil** I get my olive oil from my mum when she visits me from Algeria. There's a farm at home that produces this great artisanal olive oil in really small quantities. I go for either Lebanese, Turkish or Moroccan oils. I love extra virgin olive oil because it has such a strong taste and smell.
- **Orange blossom water** is my favourite, as the smell reminds me of being at my grandmother's house when I was little. It's made by distilling the blossoms of sour orange trees, and it lends a delicate flavour to pastries, syrups and drinks. It can be pretty strong so use sparingly at first, adding it little by little.

Food styling JENNIFER JOYCE | Styling REBECCA NEWPORT

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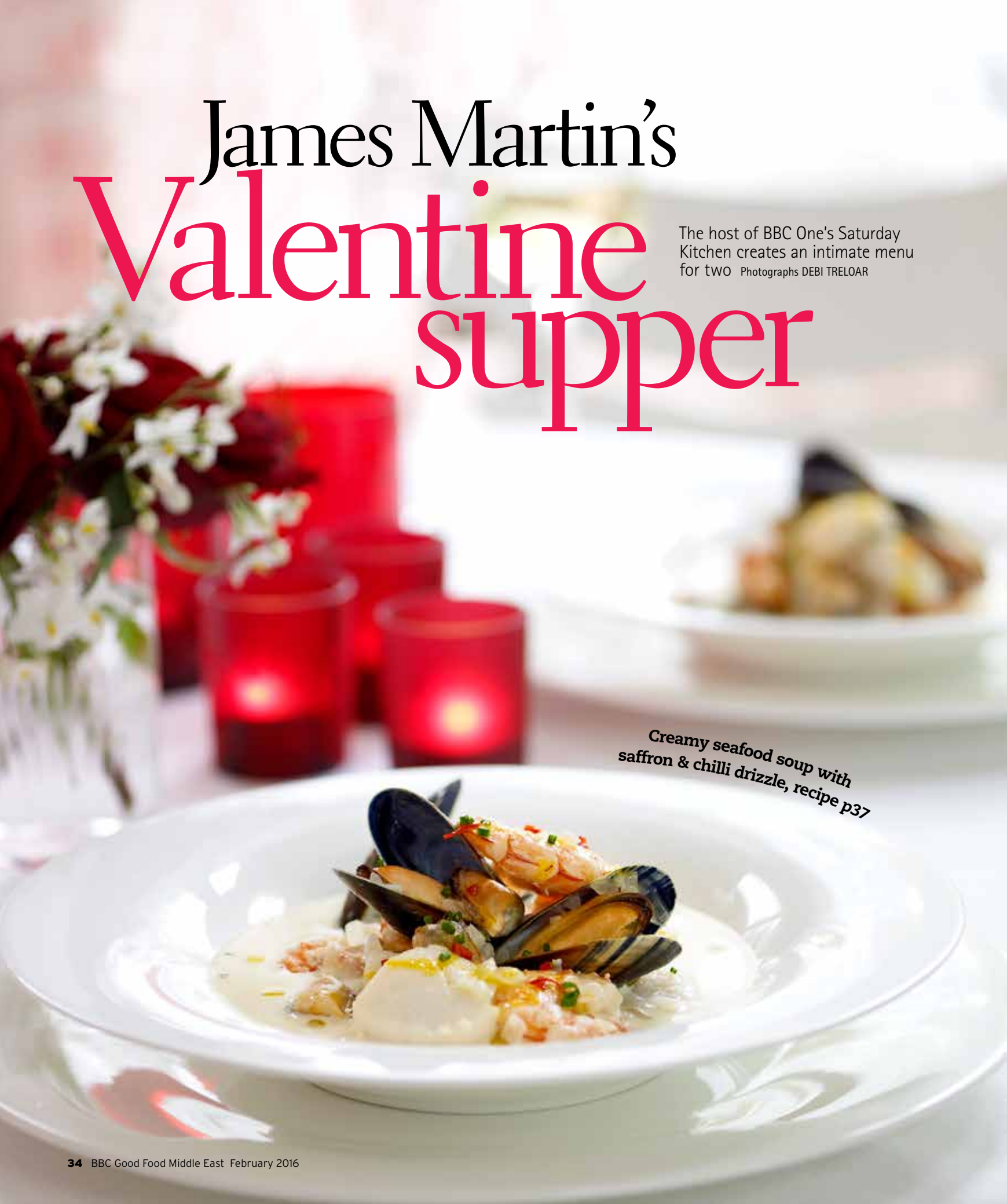
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James Martin's Valentine supper

The host of BBC One's Saturday Kitchen creates an intimate menu for two Photographs DEBI TRELOAR



Creamy seafood soup with saffron & chilli drizzle, recipe p37

SUPPER FOR TWO

- Creamy seafood soup with saffron & chilli drizzle
- Pan-fried salmon with caper berry butter
- All-in-one roasted vegetables
- Hot chocolate & pistachio pudding

TIMEPLAN
FOR DINNER AT 7PM

THE DAY BEFORE

- Make the base to the soup and chill
- Make the saffron & chilli drizzle

ON THE DAY

- Make the pudding and chill
- 6.30pm Get the vegetables roasting
- 6.45pm Reheat and finish the soup
- 7.15pm Cook the salmon and serve with the vegetables, lower the oven ready for the chocolate pudding





All-in-one roasted vegetables, recipe p37

Pan-fried salmon with caper berry butter, recipe p37

A Valentine's Day supper needs to be glamorous and memorable, so my menu features seafood, chocolate and some simple yet different flavours. But you want to enjoy time together, so I've made it hassle-free, too. You can make the starter and pud ahead, plus the main course is dead simple



Creamy seafood soup with saffron & chilli drizzle

This starter looks great and allows you time to spend on the main course.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 40 mins **COOK** 30 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT

FOR THE SOUP
1 tbsp olive oil
1 small garlic clove, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
500g mussels, scrubbed and debearded
250ml white wine
250ml chicken stock
142ml tub double cream
6-8 raw prawns, peeled
2-3 scallops, halved horizontally
small bunch chives, snipped
FOR THE DRIZZLE
small pinch saffron strands
75ml white wine
4 tbsp olive oil
½ red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

1 For the drizzle, put the saffron into a small pan, pour over the wine and simmer until almost completely evaporated. Take off the heat, then pour over the oil, stir through the chilli and leave to infuse. The oil can be made up to 1 day ahead.
2 Prepare the mussels: scrub and debeard them, then tap any open ones against the side of the sink. If they don't close, discard them. To make the soup, heat the oil in a large saucepan, then cook the garlic and onion for 3-4 mins until soft. Turn the heat up, throw the mussels into the pan, then pour over the wine. Cover the pan, then cook the mussels for 4 mins, shaking the pot from time to time until they are all open. Drain the mussels, reserving the liquid. When cool enough to handle, remove most of the mussels from their shells, leaving a handful intact, then discard the onion and garlic. As you sort through the mussels, throw away any that are not open.
3 Strain the reserved mussel liquid through a fine sieve into a large saucepan, add the chicken stock and bring to the boil. Lower the heat, add the cream and simmer for about 5 mins. The soup can be prepared up to this stage a day ahead – just chill the mussels separately.
4 To serve, bring the soup to a simmer, drop the prawns in, then cook for 2-3 mins until they just turn pink. Add the scallops and mussels, then simmer for about 1 min more to heat the mussels and gently poach the scallops. Divide the hot soup between 2 bowls, piling the seafood into the middle. Drizzle over the saffron oil, sprinkle with chives, then serve.
PER SERVING 857 kcalories • protein 32g • carbohydrate 13g • fat 69g • saturated fat 26g • fibre 1g • sugar 9g • salt 1.71g



Pan-fried salmon with caper berry butter

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 10 mins EASY

2 tbsp olive oil
350g salmon fillets, pin-boned and skinned
small knob of butter
85g caper berries
small handful parsley leaves, chopped

1 Heat the olive oil in a non-stick pan. Season the salmon, then fry the fillets over a medium heat for 5-6 mins. Do not shake the pan or move the fillets as they cook. Flip the fillets over, add a knob of butter to the pan with the caper berries, then remove from the heat. The residual heat in the pan will continue to cook the fish.
2 Lift the fish onto warm plates, swirl the parsley in the buttery juices, then spoon over the fish. Serve with roasted vegetables.
PER SERVING 464 kcalories • protein 37g • carbohydrate 2g • fat 35g • saturated fat 8g • fibre 1g • sugar none • salt 3.46g



All-in-one roasted vegetables

SERVES 2 PREP 20 mins
COOK 50 mins EASY V
VIT C 1 OF 5 A DAY

250g new potatoes, cut into chunky slices
1 red onion, cut into wedges
1 fennel bulb, trimmed and cut into wedges
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp clear honey
1 lemon
few rosemary sprigs
1 tsp fennel seeds

1 Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C. Place the vegetables in a roasting tin, then drizzle with the olive oil and honey. Cut the lemon in half, squeeze over the juice, then add the halves to the tin. Toss everything together with the rosemary and fennel seeds, season well, then roast for about 40-50 mins, turning occasionally until golden brown and cooked.
2 Remove from the oven and coat all the veg in the sticky glaze in the base of the tin. Serve in a small pile on the plates next to the salmon, then pile the rest in a side dish.
PER SERVING 227 kcalories • protein 4g • carbohydrate 28g • fat 12g • saturated fat 2g • fibre 3g • sugar 8g • salt 0.06g

Hot chocolate & pistachio pudding

These are usually made in individual moulds, but here I've made a big one to share.

SERVES 2 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 30 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT

100g good-quality dark chocolate
50g butter
1 tbsp ground almonds
2 eggs, separated
1 tbsp cornflour
2 tbsp caster sugar
1 tbsp shelled pistachios, roughly chopped
8 chocolate truffles
vanilla ice cream, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C. Finely grate 40g of the chocolate and set aside. Melt half the butter, then brush liberally all over the inside of a 1pt pudding basin. Dust with the grated chocolate, shaking out any excess, then set aside on a baking sheet.
2 Melt the remaining chocolate (including any shaken-out excess) and butter in a small heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, or in a microwave-proof bowl in the microwave on High for 2-3 mins, stirring once. Scrape the mixture into a bigger bowl, then beat in the ground almonds, egg yolks and cornflour. Whisk the egg whites in a separate bowl until they form stiff peaks. Gradually beat in the caster sugar; a hand-held electric whisk is perfect for this.
3 Fold the egg-white mixture and chopped pistachios into the melted chocolate mixture. Spoon half the combined mixture into the base of the pudding mould, place 8 truffles on top, then fill with the remaining mixture. Smooth the top of the pudding, then bake for 20 mins until risen and set.
4 Turn the hot pudding out onto a serving dish and bring to the table to share with a good-quality vanilla ice cream.

PER SERVING 972 kcalories • protein 17g • carbohydrate 78g • fat 68g • saturated fat 34g • fibre 5g, sugar 62g, salt 0.65g



Completely irresistible

Food styling: LISA HARRISON | Styling: RACHEL JUKES



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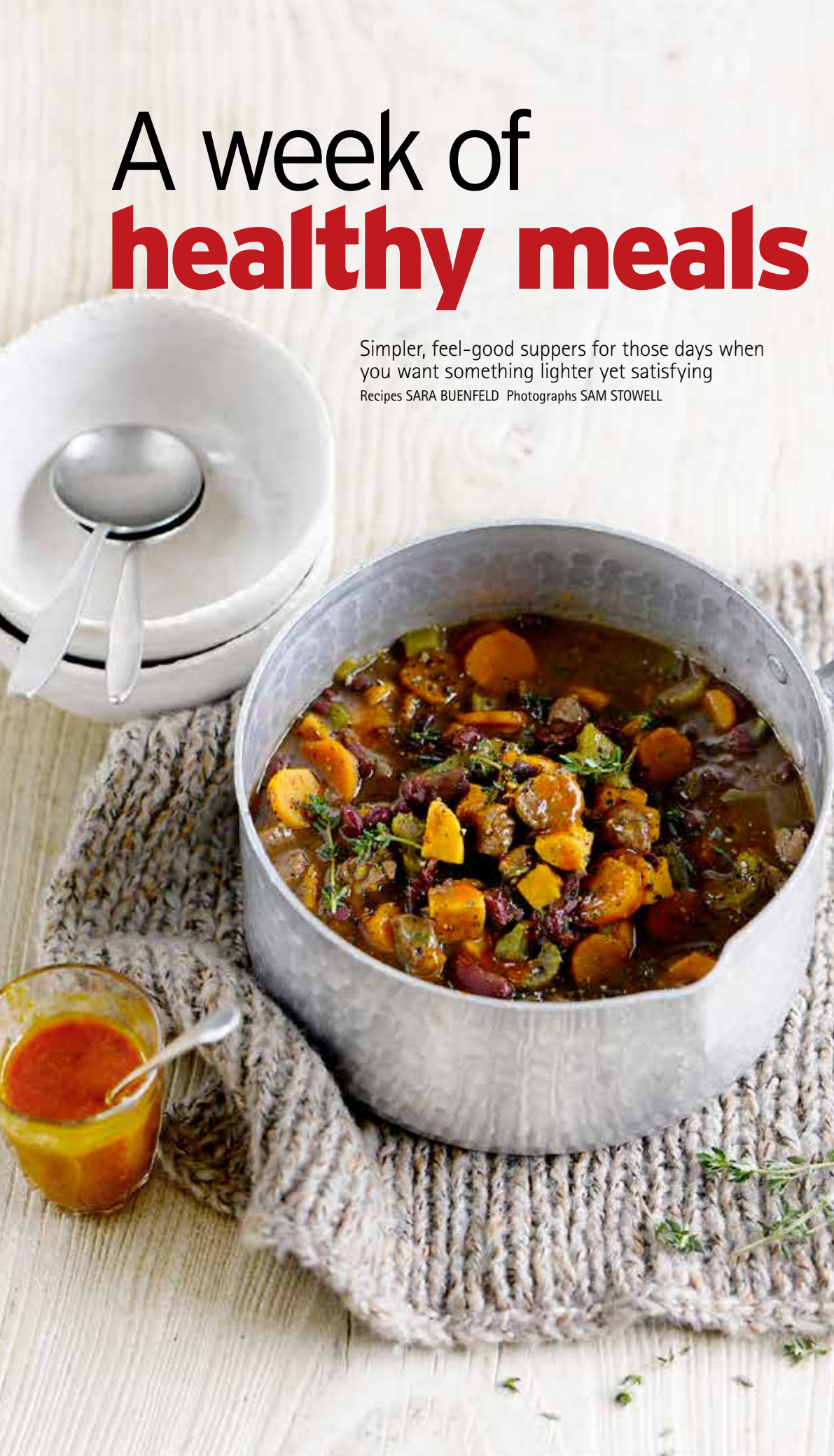
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A week of healthy meals

Simpler, feel-good suppers for those days when you want something lighter yet satisfying

Recipes SARA BUENFELD Photographs SAM STOWELL



Monday

Jamaican red bean soup

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 30 mins

EASY | LOW FAT | LOW CAL | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | IRON | 4 OF 5 A DAY | GOOD 4 YOU

1 tsp coconut oil or rapeseed oil
175g lean rump steak, finely diced
1 small sweet potato, cut into small chunks
2 small carrots, sliced
1 green pepper, deseeded and cut into small chunks
1 celery stick, sliced
4 spring onions, thinly sliced
4 thyme sprigs, leaves picked
400g can red kidney beans in water (no need to drain)
600ml beef stock
½ tsp ground allspice
hot pepper or Scotch bonnet sauce, to taste

1 Heat the oil in a large non-stick pan and stir-fry the beef for 1 min until it just changes colour, then remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add all the vegetables to the pan with the thyme and fry in the meat juices for 5 mins until starting to soften.

2 Tip in the beans and their juice with the stock, allspice and hot pepper sauce, adding it a little at a time to make sure it's not too hot, then cover and cook for 20 mins. Stir in the beef, cook for a few mins to heat through, then ladle into bowls. Serve with hot pepper sauce, if you like.

PER SERVING 415 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 2g • carbs 39g • sugars 15g • fibre 18g • protein 38g • salt 1.7g

Tip

If you can find it, try using hanger steak rather than rump, for an equally delicious (but less expensive) cut of meat.



Tuesday

Salmon noodles with sushi ginger

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins
COOK 15 mins EASY LOW CAL
FIBRE VIT C OMEGA-3 1 OF 5 A DAY

2 nests of wholewheat noodles
2 tsp sesame oil
1 tbsp low-salt soy sauce, plus extra to serve (optional)
1 tbsp rice wine vinegar
2 skinless salmon fillets
100g mangetout, halved lengthways
4 long broccoli spears, about 75g, cut into bite-sized pieces
6 spring onions, chopped
1 tbsp sushi ginger, chopped

1 Pour boiling water over the noodles, set aside to soak for 5 mins, then drain and toss in a drizzle of sesame oil.
2 Stir the soy and vinegar together in a shallow dish. Add the salmon fillets, turning well to coat them, then lift out, reserving the juices.
3 Heat 1 tsp of the sesame oil in a wok, add the salmon fillets and cook gently for 5 mins, turning once, until the fillets are tender and cooked all the way through. Lift from the pan and cover with a plate or foil to keep them warm.
4 Add the remaining oil to the pan, tip in the vegetables and ginger, and stir-fry for **5** mins until tender. Add the reserved soy mixture with 2 tbsp water and the noodles, and cook for 1 min. Toss well, then serve with the salmon, and extra soy sauce, if you like.

PER SERVING 476 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 3g • carbs 38g • sugars 5g • fibre 7g • protein 36g • salt 1.7g





Wednesday

Beet & feta burgers with horseradish dressing

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 10 mins

EASY | V | CALCIUM | FOLATE | FIBRE | 1 OF 5 A DAY

250g pack cooked beetroot (not in vinegar)
50g wholewheat breadcrumbs (you could just grate a spare bap)
85g feta, crumbled
1 medium egg
3 spring onions, finely chopped
1 tbsp chopped dill, plus 1 tsp for the dressing
1 tsp rapeseed oil
2 wholewheat baps or burger buns
3 tbsp natural bio yoghurt
1 tsp hot horseradish sauce
watercress, to serve

1 Coarsely grate the beetroot, then press down in a sieve to squeeze out as much of the juice as possible. Stir the breadcrumbs, feta, egg, spring onions and 1 tbsp dill into the grated beetroot and mix well. Shape into 2 burgers – they will feel very soft, but will firm up when cooked.
2 Heat the oil in a non-stick pan and gently fry the burgers for 5 mins each side. Meanwhile, split the burger buns and warm in the toaster. Make a dressing by stirring the yoghurt with the horseradish and 1 tsp dill.
3 Spread a little of the dressing onto the bottom of the burger buns and top with a burger. Spoon on the remaining dressing, then finish with the watercress and bun top.

PER SERVING 462 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 8g • carbs 48g • sugars 17g • fibre 7g • protein 24g • salt 3.1g

Thursday

Orange & rosemary pork with broccoli & pea crush

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 20 mins

EASY | P | LOW FAT | LOW CAL | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | 3 OF 5 A DAY | GOOD 4 YOU

1 tsp rapeseed oil
2 x 100g pieces lean pork fillet, all visible fat removed
5 shallots, halved
2 rosemary sprigs
150ml chicken stock
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp clear honey
1 orange, peel and pith removed
FOR THE BROCCOLI & PEA CRUSH
200g broccoli, cut into small florets
3 spring onions, chopped
100g frozen petits pois

1 Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the pork, turning the meat to seal it. Once browned, remove from the pan and reduce the heat. Add the shallots, cut-side down, cover and cook for 8-10 mins until softened.
2 Return the pork to the pan with the rosemary, pour in the stock, stir in the paprika and honey, then cover and cook gently for 10 mins.
3 Meanwhile, boil the broccoli and spring onions in a covered pan for 5 mins, then add the petits pois and cook 5 mins more until tender. Drain, then crush with a masher.
4 Cut between the membrane of the orange over a bowl to make segments, then add any resulting juice to the pork. When the pork is cooked, remove from the heat and toss through the segments. Serve with the broccoli & pea crush.

PER SERVING 438 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 1g • carbs 16g • sugars 12g • fibre 9g • protein 32g • salt 0.4g »

Friday

Chipotle chicken with corn & pepper pilaf

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins

EASY LOW FAT LOW CAL FIBRE VIT C 3 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU GLUTEN FREE

1 lime, zest and juice of ½, the other ½ cut into wedges
1 tbsp chipotle paste
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 skinless chicken breast fillets
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and finely diced
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
2 corn cobs
small pack coriander, a few leaves reserved, the rest chopped

1 Mix the lime zest and juice with the chipotle paste and 2 tsp oil in a bowl. Cut each chicken breast into diagonal slices to make 3-4 fillets, add to the bowl and toss until well coated.

2 Heat the remaining oil in a non-stick pan, add the onion and fry for 10 mins, stirring frequently, until softened. Add the pepper, cumin seeds and chilli, and cook for 5 mins more. Meanwhile, slice down the sides of the corn cobs with a sharp knife to remove the kernels.

3 Heat a large non-stick frying pan, add the chicken and cook for 5 mins, turning once, until cooked through but still juicy. Add the corn to the pepper mixture and cook for 3-4 mins. Stir in the chopped coriander and serve with the chicken, with coriander leaves sprinkled over and the lime wedges on the side.

PER SERVING 438 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 1g • carbs 42g • sugars 16g • fibre 9g • protein 39g • salt 0.4g



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Final flourish

There's something for everyone with these dazzling do-ahead desserts. Impress your loved one with gooey chocolate, fruity meringue or a creamy coconut pudding this month

Recipes Cassie Best Photographs Adrian Lawrence

Try our **cover recipe!**



Double chocolate profiteroles with salted caramel cream, recipe p50



Turn to page 50 for the recipe

Chai coconut & mango creams

Vegan, dairy, gluten, wheat and nut free – and delicious – this dessert will go down a storm.

A LITTLE EFFORT | VIT C | 1OF5 A DAY | GLUTEN FREE

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins plus chilling
COOK 20 mins

4 allspice berries
4 cardamom pods
1 cinnamon stick
3 cloves
1 vanilla pod, split, or ½ tsp vanilla extract
2 x 400ml cans full-fat coconut milk
200g/7oz caster sugar
a little vegetable or sunflower oil, for greasing
1 ripe mango, 1 cheek cut into small dice and set aside to serve, remaining 140g/5oz roughly chopped
juice ½ lime
4 tbsp agar agar flakes
toasted coconut shavings, 2 crinkly passion fruits and mint leaves, to serve

1 Put the allspice berries and cardamom pods in a large saucepan. Use the end of a rolling pin to gently split open the cardamom pods and crack the allspice into a few pieces. Add the remaining spices, coconut milk and 140g of the caster sugar to the pan. Set over a gentle heat and simmer for 5 mins. Cool, then chill overnight.

2 Grease 4 x 200ml pudding moulds, ramekins or pretty glasses with a little oil (you can skip this if you don't want to turn the creams out once set). Put the remaining sugar, mango, and lime juice in a food processor and blend to a purée. Sieve the purée into a saucepan, sprinkle 1 tbsp agar agar flakes over the surface and leave to stand for 5 mins or until the agar agar has dissolved. Stir the agar agar into the purée and bring to a gentle heat, then simmer for 3-5 mins, stirring now and then, until the purée has thickened slightly. Divide between the moulds and chill for at least 2 hrs or until set.

3 Sieve the infused coconut milk into a clean pan and discard the spices. Sprinkle over the remaining agar agar flakes and leave for 5 mins until the agar agar has dissolved. Heat gently for 3-5 mins, stirring now and then. Divide the mixture between the moulds and chill for at least 4 hrs, or overnight.

4 To serve, dip the base of each mould into hot water for 10 secs or so, then turn out onto a plate. Top each dessert with a little chopped mango, some passion fruit seeds and a small sprig of mint, then sprinkle the coconut flakes around the plate.

PER SERVING 626 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 30g • carbs 68g • sugars 64g • fibre 4g • protein 3g • salt none

Tip

MAKE AHEAD
Prepare up to 1 day ahead (agar agar can turn desserts watery if left for too long).



Food styling JENNIFER JOYCE | Styling POLLY WEBB-WILSON



Double chocolate profiteroles with salted caramel cream

What's date night without profiteroles? This version is twice as nice – with chocolate choux buns smothered in a duo of chocolates and filled with salted caramel. You can make the choux buns a day or two in advance, refresh them in the oven and fill with cream on the day.

MORE OF A CHALLENGE

SERVES 6 **PREP** 45 mins **COOK** 35 mins

FOR THE CHOUX PASTRY
75g/2½oz plain flour
2 tbsp cocoa powder
85g/3oz slightly salted butter, chopped into small pieces
3 medium eggs, beaten
FOR THE SALTED CARAMEL CREAM
½ x 397g can Carnation caramel
½-1 tsp sea salt flakes
300ml pot double or whipping cream
TO DECORATE
100g/4oz white chocolate, finely chopped
50g/2oz dark chocolate, finely chopped
chocolate sprinkles or edible glitter (optional)

1 Sieve the flour and cocoa into a bowl. Put the butter in a saucepan and add 225ml water. Bring to a fast boil, then simmer until the butter has melted. Tip in the flour mixture and quickly beat with a wooden spoon until the mixture comes together to a smooth, shiny dough, and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Tip the dough into a bowl and spread it up the sides with your spoon to help it to cool down quickly (but don't let it cool completely – it's easier to incorporate the eggs while it's still warm). Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment.
2 While the dough is still warm, add the eggs a little at a time, beating well with a wooden spoon between each addition. You're looking for a smooth consistency, that reluctantly falls off the spoon in a V shape (you may not need to use all the egg). If the mixture becomes too runny, you won't be able to pipe it; if it's too thick, it won't puff up in the oven. When you're happy with the consistency, spoon it into a disposable piping bag.
3 Snip off the end of the piping bag to give you a 1cm opening. Holding the bag at a 90-degree angle to the baking tray, pipe balls of the dough, about the size of a walnut, over the 2 sheets – you should make 18-20 in total. Dip your finger in a little water and gently pat down any peaks on the top of the balls of dough. Place the 2 sheets in the oven and bake for 25-30 mins, swapping the trays over after 20 mins. The choux buns should be puffed up and crisp when cooked. Leave to cool completely.
4 Spoon the caramel into a large bowl, add ½ tsp salt, mix well and taste – add a little more salt if you like. Add the cream and whisk until holding soft peaks (the cream can now be stored in the fridge for up to 1 day).
5 Split the choux buns in half, spoon a generous dollop of salted caramel cream into each and replace the lids. Melt the white and dark chocolates in 2 bowls suspended over pans of gently simmering water, or in the microwave. Transfer the dark chocolate to a piping bag and set aside to cool a little. Top each bun with a spoonful of white chocolate, stack the profiteroles on a plate or cake stand, then drizzle over the dark chocolate and sprinkle with chocolate sprinkles or edible glitter, if you like. Serve straight away.

PER SERVING 479 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 22g • carbs 28g • sugars 19g • fibre 1g • protein 8g • salt 0.7g

Tip

MAKE AHEAD
Prepare up to the end of step 3, then store in a sealed container for up to 2 days. Refresh in the oven at 180C/160C fan/gas 4 for 5 mins, then cool and continue recipe.



Clementine, cranberry & pistachio meringue wreath

This stunning meringue wreath makes a showstopping centrepiece. The meringues are individually portioned, which makes serving really simple.

A LITTLE EFFORT GLUTEN FREE

SERVES 10 **PREP** 25 mins **COOK** 1 hr 30 mins

FOR THE MERINGUE
4 large egg whites
200g/7oz caster sugar
FOR THE TOPPING
100g/4oz fresh or frozen cranberries
75g/2½oz caster sugar
300ml pot double or whipping cream
2 small clementines, zested, then peeled and sliced
100g/4oz pistachios (slivered ones look nice, but use chopped if you can't find them)

1 Heat oven to 140C/120C fan/gas 2 and cut a piece of baking parchment large enough to line your biggest baking sheet. Using a plate as a template, draw a circle roughly 28cm in diameter onto the parchment, then flip it over onto the baking sheet so the pencil marks don't come into contact with the meringue.
2 Put the egg whites in a large, clean bowl and beat with an electric whisk until doubled in volume and holding soft peaks. Add the sugar 1 or 2 tbsp at a time, whisking continuously, until the meringue is stiff and shiny, and the sugar has been used up.
3 Dab a blob of meringue on each corner of the parchment to stick it to the baking sheet. Using the circle as a guide, spoon 10 mounds of meringue onto the parchment in a wreath shape. Create a little divot in the centre of each one with the back of a teaspoon. Bake for 1 hr 30 mins, then leave in the oven to cool completely (overnight if you can).
4 Put the cranberries and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Turn up the heat and boil for 1-2 mins, until you have a sugary syrup, but the cranberries are still whole. Leave to cool completely.
5 When you're ready to serve, place the meringue wreath on a large board or plate. Pour the cream into a bowl, and add the zest and liqueur, if using. Whip until the cream just holds soft peaks. Fill each meringue crevice with a spoonful of cream, then top with 1-2 slices of clementine and some cranberries. Drizzle some cranberry syrup and sprinkle generously with pistachios, then let everyone dive in.

PER SERVING 304 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 8g • carbs 32g • sugars 31g • fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.1g

Tip

MAKE AHEAD
You can make the meringue wreath up to 3 days before serving. Once cool, place on a tray lined with baking parchment and cover with cling film. The cranberries can also be cooked and stored in the fridge for 3 days.

gf
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Ken Hom's Chinese New Year

The legendary chef shares favourite recipes to celebrate the festival in style

PHOTOGRAPHS WILL HEAP



Spicy Sichuan-style prawns

Cashew chicken



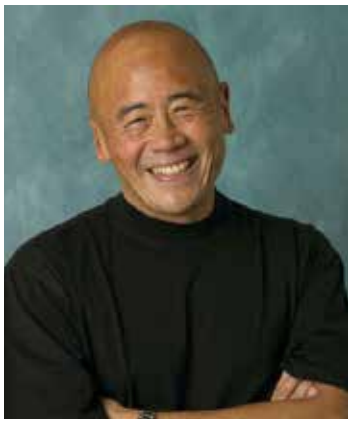
Chow mein

Stir-fried beef with oyster sauce

Chinese classics to cook at home

We asked Ken Hom for his top dishes for you to cook at home. Each recipe makes an easy meal served with rice, or choose a couple of them to feed a crowd over Chinese New Year.

Chinese New Year is on February 8



Growing up in Chicago in the early sixties, Ken Hom earned pocket money working in his uncle's Chinese restaurant. He started giving cookery classes to fund his university fees and was spotted by Madhur Jaffrey, who recommended him to the BBC. Since his first TV series, Ken Hom's Chinese Cookery, in 1984 he's been one of our most revered authorities on Chinese food.

How will you be celebrating Chinese New Year?
I'll be having a big Chinese banquet in London with friends, as I've done for more than 30 years. London has some of the best Chinese food in Europe.

What are the main food traditions?
Think of it as Christmas, New Year and Easter rolled into one. In China it lasts for about two weeks. The food is linked to good wishes for the year ahead. There is always a fish dish, because 'fish' sounds like the Chinese word for prosperity. Chicken often appears as it is a symbol of fortune, while duck means fidelity. When I was young, we always had a traditional dish of dried oysters with sea moss, as the names are linked to prosperity. And no banquet would be complete without a noodle dish, because the strands represent longevity.

What do you remember from your childhood?
I was told to give the tender cheek meat from the fish head to my mum as a sign of respect and honour. We were also taught never to cut our noodles as it would shorten our lives. Every year I rubbed honey on the kitchen god's lips – most households have a picture or a painting of him – so he'd go to heaven and say sweet things about us.

Do the regions of China have specific traditions?
Yes – in Beijing, for example, they have potsticker dumplings, which the family make together around the kitchen table and then put outside to freeze until they're ready to cook them. My traditions have been southern – very Cantonese with lots of steamed or stir-fried fish and seafood.

How have things changed over the years?
They've become more elaborate, with Champagne and wine now appearing on Chinese New Year tables, but food is still at the heart of the occasion.

What do you look forward to?
When I was a child, I loved getting the red money envelopes that were always given to wish people a happy, prosperous New Year. But mostly I anticipate eating and getting together with family and friends.



Cashew chicken

This sums up the Chinese love of contrasting textures. Tender, succulent pieces of chicken are combined with sweet, crunchy cashew nuts. The secret to this popular dish is the use of the technique of 'velveting' in hot oil or water, which seals a cornflour coating around the chicken, and then stir-frying as a second step to give it that special taste.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 8 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT

450g/1lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into large chunks
1 egg white
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tsp cornflour
300ml/1/2 pint groundnut oil or water, plus 2 tsp groundnut oil
100g/4oz cashew nuts
1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry Sherry
1 tbsp light soy sauce
1 shredded spring onion, to garnish

1 Put the chicken in a bowl with the egg white, sesame oil, cornflour and 1 tsp salt, and mix well. Chill for 20 mins.
2 If you are using oil for velveting the chicken, heat a wok until very hot and then add the oil. When it is very hot, remove the wok from the heat and immediately add the chicken, stirring vigorously to prevent it sticking. After about 2 mins, when the chicken turns white, quickly drain it and all of the oil into a stainless steel colander set over a bowl. Discard the oil. If you are using water instead of oil, do exactly the same but bring the water to the boil in a saucepan before adding the chicken. It will take about 4 mins for the chicken to turn white in the water.
3 If you have used a wok, wipe it clean. Heat it until it is very hot, then add the 2 tsp of groundnut oil. Add the cashew nuts and stir-fry for 1 min. Add the rice wine or dry Sherry and soy sauce. Return the chicken to the wok and stir-fry for 2 mins. Scatter over the spring onions and serve immediately.

PER SERVING energy 302 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 3g • carbs 7g • sugars 1g • fibre 1g • protein 33g • salt 2.2g

Food styling jennifer joyce | Interview Holly Brooke-smith



Spicy Sichuan-style prawns

Sichuan cooking is known for its use of chillies and in recent years adventurous diners in the UK have discovered how delicious it can be. This is one of the best-known dishes from that south-west province.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 25 mins, **COOK** 5 mins

EASY

11/2 tbsp groundnut oil
2cm/3/4in piece ginger, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
1 spring onion, finely chopped
450g/1lb raw prawns, shelled and de-veined
FOR THE SAUCE
1 tbsp tomato purée
3 tsp chilli bean sauce
2 tsp Chinese black vinegar or cider vinegar
2 tsp golden caster sugar
2 tsp sesame oil
handful coriander leaves and sliced spring onion, to serve

Heat a wok over a high heat. Add the groundnut oil and, when it is very hot and slightly smoking, add the ginger, garlic and spring onions. Stir-fry for 20 secs, then add the prawns. Stir-fry for about 1 min, then add all the sauce ingredients, along with 1/2 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp ground black pepper. Continue to stir-fry for another 3 mins over a high heat. Serve at once, scattered with the coriander and spring onion.

PER SERVING energy 286 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 5g • carbs 8g • sugars 4g • fibre 2g • protein 25g • salt 2.0g



Stir-fried beef with oyster sauce

This was one of the most popular dishes in my family's restaurant, especially with Westerners. It is very savoury and quite addictive. Buy the best brand of oyster sauce you can find (such as Lee Kum Kee, available from Tesco and Waitrose), as good oyster sauce should not taste at all fishy. Rather, it has a meaty flavour that goes very well with beef or pork. This simple dish is best served with plain steamed rice.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins, plus marinating **COOK** 10 mins

EASY

450g/1lb lean beef steak
1 tbsp light soy sauce
2 tsp sesame oil
1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry Sherry
2 tsp cornflour
3 tbsp groundnut oil
1 red pepper, cut into chunky dice
1 green pepper, cut into chunky dice
3 tbsp oyster sauce
2 spring onions, finely shredded, to garnish

1 Cut the beef into slices 5cm long and 5mm thick, cutting against the grain of the meat. Put them in a bowl. Mix in the soy sauce, sesame oil, rice wine or Sherry and cornflour. Leave to marinate for 20 mins.

2 Heat a wok until it is very hot, then add the groundnut oil. When it is slightly smoking, add the beef slices and stir-fry for 5 mins or until lightly browned. Remove the meat from the wok and drain well in a colander set inside a bowl. Discard the drained oil.

3 Wipe the wok clean and reheat it over a high heat. Add the peppers, and cook for 3-4 mins or until softened. Add the oyster sauce and bring it to a simmer. Return the drained beef slices to the wok and toss them thoroughly with the oyster sauce. Turn the mixture on to a serving platter, top with the spring onions and serve immediately.

PER SERVING energy 156 kcals • fat 6g • saturates 1g • carbs 4g • sugars 3g • fibre none • protein 20g • salt 1.1g



KEN'S NEW YEAR DINNER TIPS

Invite friends you really want to see! Spending hours at the table with friends is my idea of bliss, but never invite guests from one profession – nothing is worse than talking shop all evening.

Although I rarely use a microwave day to day, it is just as good as steaming the fish in the wok for a special dinner.

It's just fine to use a Chinese shop-bought dish, such as crispy duck, to supplement your banquet.

Champagne is the ideal drink, as the acidity and sweetness balance the oils and flavour in Chinese cookery.

Don't clutter the table with a huge bouquet of flowers. It's not easy to chat with flowers in your face! One flower at each setting is more elegant.

Chow mein

The name means 'stir-fried noodles' and this egg-noodle dish is as popular in the West as it is in southern China. You can add almost any ingredient, such as fish, meat, poultry or vegetables.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 8 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT

225g/8oz dried or fresh egg noodles
1 tbsp sesame oil, plus 1 tsp
100g/4oz boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into fine shreds
21/2 tbsp groundnut oil
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
50g/2oz mangetout, finely shredded
50g/2oz Parma ham or cooked ham, finely shredded
2 tsp light soy sauce
2 tsp dark soy sauce
1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry Sherry
1/2 tsp freshly ground white pepper
1/2 tsp golden caster sugar
2 spring onions, finely chopped
FOR THE MARINADE
2 tsp light soy sauce
2 tsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry Sherry
1 tsp sesame oil
1/2 tsp freshly ground white pepper

1 Cook the noodles in a large pan of boiling water for 3-5 mins, then drain and put them in cold water. Drain thoroughly, toss them with 1 tbsp of the sesame oil and set aside.

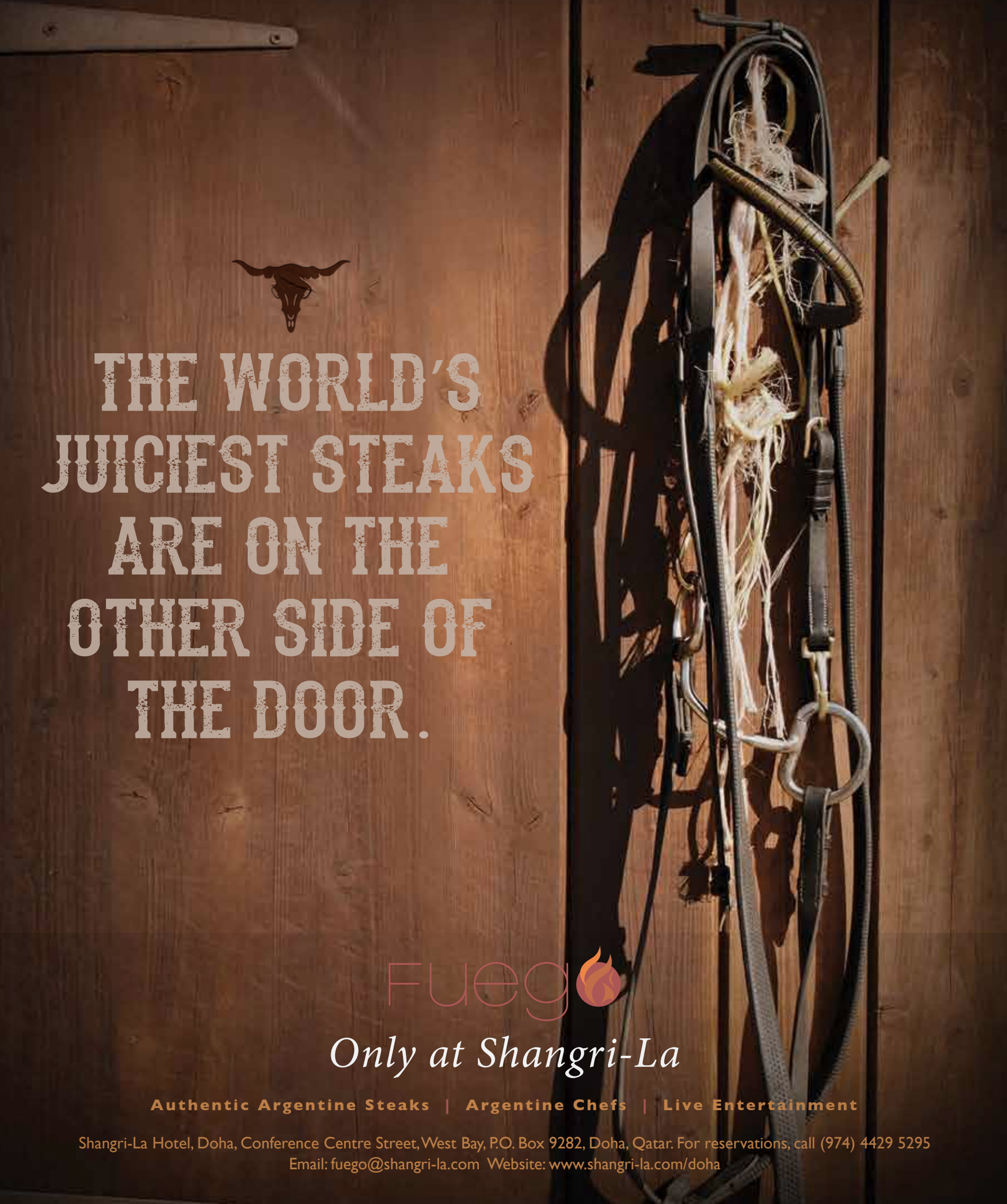
2 Combine the chicken with all the marinade ingredients and 1/2 tsp salt, mix well and then leave to marinate for about 10 mins.

3 Heat a wok over a high heat. Add 1 tbsp of the groundnut oil and, when it is very hot and slightly smoking, add the chicken shreds. Stir-fry for about 2 mins and then transfer to a plate. Wipe the wok clean. Reheat the wok until it is very hot, then add the remaining groundnut oil. When the oil is slightly smoking, add the garlic and stir-fry for 10 secs. Then add the mangetout and ham, and stir-fry for about 1 min.

4 Add the noodles, soy sauces, rice wine or Sherry, pepper, sugar, spring onions and 1 tsp salt. Stir-fry for 2 mins. Return the chicken and any juices to the noodle mixture. Stir-fry for about 3-4 mins or until the chicken is cooked. Add 1 tsp sesame oil and give the mixture a few final stirs. Put on a warm platter and serve immediately.

PER SERVING energy 399 kcals • fat 18g • saturates 4g • carbs 41g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 18g • salt 4.2g

Food styling jennifer joyce | Interview Holly Brooke-smith


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The clever cook's toolkit

At Crate and Barrel, we approach equipping the kitchen drawer the way we would a hardworking tool kit. Our garlic press must mince with one, effortless squeeze. We choose wood cutting boards in maple, walnut or sustainable bamboo that are rock hard to take a good chop, yet beautiful enough to serve on. Multiply our thoughtful approach across salad spinners, measuring spoons, silicone spatulas and so forth, and suddenly your choices become not only easier, but ones you can trust.

Beyond cookware, Everyday Inspiration from Crate and Barrel gives you a lot more to crave; from elegant furniture to stylish home décor and enticing serveware, giving your home a fresh perspective and distinctive personality. If you are searching for ways to seamlessly integrate a clean, classic design in your home, at an affordable price point, then stop by Crate and Barrel today to discover your next favorite piece.



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Should we keep taking the tablets?

If you eat a balanced diet, do you need to take supplements as well? Kerry Torrens, our nutritional therapist, gives us the low-down

Although the majority of health experts say we should be able to get all the nutrients we need from our food – and vitamin D from sunlight – the latest evidence suggests that many of us are still falling short.

Thirteen per cent of 11 to 18-year-old girls have lower than adequate levels of vitamin A, according to the government's 2014 National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS). Almost half of women don't get enough selenium, and more than a fifth are low in iron.

Many of us are deficient in vitamin D – as we cover up or use sunscreen during the summer. Also, as we age our bodies become less efficient at absorbing the nutrients from our food, and manufacturing vitamin D in our skin.

Another barrier to getting optimum nutrition from our food is the declining nutrient levels in our soils, as a result of intensive farming. This means that many foods, including fruit and vegetables, contain lower levels of nutrients than they used to. Processing, cooking and storage also has an impact on the nutritional quality of the food on our plates.

Despite all this, our bodies evolved to digest and absorb real food rather than the isolated (and often synthetic) nutrients found in supplements. This means there's still no substitute for a good diet and a healthy lifestyle.

If you eat a wide and varied selection of quality fresh and natural foods (including wholegrains, leafy greens, nuts, seeds and lean sources of protein), you should get all the vitamins and minerals you need. Our chart, opposite, shows you how.

That said, there are some people who do need certain supplements – find out below if you're one of them – and talk to your GP for more specific advice.

Who does need supplements?

The Department of Health recommends supplements for the following people:

- **Children aged 6 months to 5 years** 7-8.5 micrograms (mcg) vitamin D daily (unless fed with a fortified formula)
- **Mums-to-be prior to conception and for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy** 400mcg folic acid daily
- **Pregnant/breastfeeding mums** 10mcg vitamin D daily
- **Over-65s** 10mcg vitamin D daily
- **Housebound people** 10mcg vitamin D daily

Be smart with your supplements

DO...

✓ Talk to your GP, pharmacist or dietitian before you start a course of supplements.

✓ Check with your GP if you are on medication to ensure that there are no contraindications.

✓ Buy supplements from a reputable source.

✓ Take them with water or orange juice (if you take iron, avoid grape juice as it inhibits absorption).

✓ Keep supplements in a cool, dry, dark place.

DON'T...

× Buy online unless it's from a recognised retailer.

× Exceed the recommended dose unless advised by your GP or pharmacist. Too high a dose of water-soluble nutrients (vitamins B, C and folic acid) will pass through the body and be excreted. Fat- soluble vitamins (A,D, E, K) are stored in the liver and fat tissues; too much puts pressure on the liver and could make you feel unwell.

× Double up if you miss a dose. Take it at the next scheduled time instead.

× Take with with tea or coffee as caffeine and tannins interfere with absorption.

LABELS – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) are being replaced with **Nutrient Reference Values (NRV).** NRVs are the levels of essential nutrients considered adequate for most healthy people. We've included **NRVs** on our chart (opposite).

Photographs ISTOCKPHOTO | This information is for guidance only and should not be taken in the place of medical advice. You should refer to your GP/dietitian/pharmacist regarding your specific nutritional needs.

THE NUTRIENTS YOU NEED...	AND HOW TO GET YOUR DAILY DOSE FROM FOOD

Vitamin A

GOOD FOR A healthy respiratory tract • Fighting infection • Plump youthful skin • Night vision
TAKE A daily dose of 800mcg with a meal
NEED TO KNOW Choose one with betacarotene, which your body converts to vitamin A when needed


25g PORTION LIVER PATE

OR


50g COOKED HAGGIS

OR


180g BAKED SWEET POTATO

Vitamin B2 and B6

GOOD FOR Hair, nails, skin and eyes • Regulating hormones • Mood • Healthy red blood cells
TAKE 1.4mg of each B vitamin at breakfast
NEED TO KNOW Getting too much? You'll know because B2 turns your urine bright yellow!


150g PORK FILLET

+


30g BRAN FLAKES

+


150g POT OF YOGURT

Folic acid

GOOD FOR Heart health • A healthy foetus • Repairing and making DNA • Red blood cells
TAKE 200mg at breakfast
NEED TO KNOW Alcohol and antibiotics can deplete levels of folic acid. Epileptics should consult their GP


80g BRUSSELS SPROUTS

+


80g LEAF SPINACH

COMBINE FOLIC ACID WITH VITAMIN B12 FOR BETTER RESULTS

Vitamin C

GOOD FOR Fighting infection • Healing wounds • Healing bones, teeth and skin • Regulating cholesterol
TAKE 80mg – split doses throughout the day
NEED TO KNOW Look for 'magnesium ascorbate' on the label, as it will be gentler on your tummy


½ RED PEPPER

OR


1 LARGE ORANGE

OR


125g WATERCREST

Vitamin D

GOOD FOR Bones and teeth • Muscle function • Mood • Immune system
TAKE With a meal, not too late in the day
NEED TO KNOW Try to get 15 minutes of sun exposure everyday, if the weather is good


1 SALMON STEAK (140g)

OR


2 BOILED EGGS

OR


155g CAN PILCHARDS

Calcium

GOOD FOR Strong bones and teeth • Muscle and nerve function • Helps to lower blood pressure
TAKE 800mg at night
NEED TO KNOW Calcium citrate is easier to absorb than calcium carbonate


1 CAN SARDINES

+


200ml SKIMMED MILK

CALCIUM AND MAGNESIUM WORK TOGETHER SO LOOK FOR A COMBINED SUPPLEMENT

Iron

GOOD FOR Energy • Immune system • Brain function
TAKE 14mg in the morning on an empty stomach
NEED TO KNOW If you suffer from stomach upset when taking a supplement, choose iron in the form of ferrous fumarate or ferrous gluconate


40g PORTION SHREDDIES

+


100g LAMB'S LIVER

+


140g (SHELLED) MUSSELS

Selenium

GOOD FOR Fertility • Antioxidant protection • Anti-ageing • Metabolism • Immune system
TAKE 55mcg with a meal
NEED TO KNOW Global intake has declined in recent years, so include plenty of these food sources (right)


25g BRAZIL NUTS

OR


75g CRABMEAT

OR


30g PORTION LAMB'S KIDNEY

MOVIE MADNESS



Edamame

These are magic pops of protein, which come as peas in a pod. Available at most cinemas across the UAE now, edamame is nothing but fresh soybeans steamed and seasoned with some natural herbs and spices. They are hot, tangy and give that little soft yet crunchy texture. Edemame is gluten-free, carb-free, and is advisable for diabetics and those who are watching their weight.

Do you know that your buttery box of delicious popcorn at the cinema is costing you a minimum of 1,100kcals every time you snack? Nancy Bhatia, a lifestyle nutritionist lends advice on how to avoid falling into calorific traps during your next visit to the movies.

As most eateries around town gradually become more health-friendly, cinemas sadly seem to be moving backwards when it comes to nutrition. Where confectionaries and bakeshops now offer sugar-free and gluten-free options, cinemas still offer the same age-old nachos with highly processed cheese dip, heavily salted jalapeños and sugar concentrated colas.

Food psychology says, when you are bound in a cold and cozy environment such as cinemas, you crave snacks comprising more sugar, which are hot and crunchy. The bad news is, however, that just one popcorn tub of any flavour is worth 1,100kcals – a figure that scarily, represents 50% of the recommended daily calorie requirement for a healthy adult.

In a world that continues to battle against obesity and weight-related illnesses, try not to fall prey to options like frozen yoghurt, fruit nutella crepes, or even corn chips. They all have modified starch, excess sugar and are only good on the tongue.

Here are a few healthy cinema snack swaps, to help you resist the urge to splurge when watching a movie.



Sweet Corn

Perfect to hold and eat while watching a movie, sweet corn is a a healthy swap to unhealthy, normal popcorn that you buy at the cinema. Ask for olive oil instead of butter and go natural with lime and pepper. They are high in fibre, low in carbs and yet again, are gluten-free.



Shelled Peanuts

Perhaps a little more fiddly, but nonetheless delicious, peanuts with the shell on are crunchy, really tasty and packed with protein. Pack some into a small bag to take with you.



Trail Mix

When going to the cinema, carry a small bag of unsalted nuts. Ditch the sugary candies and instead mix your favorite nuts with some dry figs and here you have a bag of healthy trail mix that is sweet and salty – minus all the extra calories.



Water

Give up on the sugary colas and other soft drinks. They are your cinema enemies. Opt for a bottle of natural water instead – it will not only keep you away from calories but also keep you hydrated and keep your breath fresh.



Fruit Bags

If the cinema doesn't provide fruit, sneak your own prepared bag in with you. Fill it up with easy to pop fruits like grapes, cherries, or berries. You can even mix it up a little bit and throw in some walnuts too.

Nancy Bhatia is lifestyle nutritionist who has introduced healthy eating concepts like Munchbox and Fruitful, which can be found at VOX Cinemas in Burjuman and Mercato. For more information, visit: www.munchbox.ae or follow Nancy on Twitter **@myplateme** or Facebook on: **My Plate, Dubai**





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Text by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs SUPPLIED



Barefoot bliss

We travel to glistening Maldivian shores, to discover culinary creations on offer. Whether you're looking for a detox fix, a luxurious getaway or simply some time to leave real world stress behind, Conrad Maldives Rengali Island has you covered. By Sophie McCarrick

Visualise blue, just blue – the clearest, prettiest light blue you can imagine. Add in a splash of azure to a cloudless sky, an abundance of luscious greenery, a handful of gently swaying palms, a drop of turquoise to crystalline waters, a couple of idyllic, wooden dhow boats – and there you have a picture perfect, dream destination – also known as the Maldives.

A visit to Conrad Maldives Rengali Island is everything it looks in the photos (trust me when I say #nofilter) – it's all white sand, glistening waters and clear blue skies – and in this case, a gourmands dream.

As adventurous lovers of food, you may be wondering how one small island (or two adjoined by a 500m bridge in the case of Conrad Maldives) is going to satisfy your culinary cravings – but as was I, you'll be surprised to find a total of 12 food and beverage experiences awaiting, which provide a wide-range of delicious cuisines made with the highest quality ingredients – the ocean to table concept being a true highlight.

After a 30-minute seaplane journey from Malé Airport, your stylish arrival to Rengali Island – topped off with cold towels, iced beverages and a warm welcome from Conrad's friendly team – couldn't be more dreamlike. It's immediately obvious that exclusive luxury is a key ingredient at this resort, and whilst you soak up the sights of silky white sand beaches, all it takes is one deep exhale, and realisation hits; you've touched down in paradise and all that's left to do is explore, indulge in culinary creations on offer and embrace the habitual barefooted bliss of Rengali Island.





Ocean oasis or beach retreat?

Once check-in is done and dusted, you'll be escorted to one of island's 150 varied luxurious villas – good luck choosing because the term 'basic room' definitely doesn't apply here.

Nestled amidst jungle-like settings of the beachfront, exotic private villas with lavish, tropical interiors and a private









GETTING THERE

Emirates Airlines have three flights daily flying from Dubai International Airport into the Maldivian capital of Malé. Ticket prices start from US$800 (around Dhs3,000) for economy, and US$2,000 (around Dhs8,000) for business class. Please note that these figures are priced based on travel during high season.

Visit: www.emirates.com

‘Whether it be freshly caught fish or seafood, dinner under the sea, succulent grills, Chinese cuisine by celebrity chef Jereme Leung, private dinners on the beach or healthy, organic food at the spa, dining options are plentiful.’



walkway to the ocean prove perfect little hideaways – complete with gorgeous outdoor Roman-style baths.

While dreamy water villas rest picture perfectly on stilts, with a section of glass floor paneling inside for viewing soft waves crashing below. What’s better yet is that these villas come equipped with their own terrace-top infinity plunge pools. And, if you’re not spoilt for choice already, self-indulgence just stepped things up a notch at the retreat water villas, where each individual villa comes with a private spa treatment room. For those travelling with the children, the resort also has six larger villas, ideally designed for families.





Food is always moving forward, and personally as a chef I understand the importance of keeping your interests in global trends alive – our menus here at Conrad Maldives reflect that. You may think that because we are remote and far away from much of normality, that we're out of touch with the latest in food, but I can assure that we are not.





Wine and dine

Now that you're settled in and slightly less awestruck, it's time to discover what's on the menu. Yes, the Maldives may be isolated but whatever you're in the mood for will be available, confirms the resort's Executive Chef, Marco Amarone. "Our island is perfect for those interested in food. Whether it be freshly caught fish or seafood, dinner under the sea, succulent grills, Chinese cuisine by celebrity chef Jereme Leung, private dinners on the beach or healthy, organic food at the spa – dining options are plentiful" he explains.

Just when you think things have reached a pinnacle, you discover Ithaa Undersea Restaurant, the first all-glass undersea restaurant in the world. It's like being inside an aquarium, only you're not – the fish swim in open waters above, while you dine safely confined within the breathtaking restaurant. Although it's open for both lunch and dinner, without even mentioning the food, just a visit to this outlet is alone an experience not to be missed.

Next up is dinner at The Wine Cellar, set below ground level with a cosy, seductive allure. The outlet serves degustation wine dinners hosted by a chef and sommelier, and the evening takes you through six paired courses, which are each explained on individual tabletop fold-down screens throughout the meal. From a squid ink tajarin carbonara with salmon roe and sea urchin, to Alaskan crab legs served with oscietra caviar, and olive oil poached legine with pinot noir au ju white asparagus, tomato chutney and sautéed clams – it's quite a divine, scrumptious seafood affair.













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For breakfast, take a stroll to Atoll Market, where you'll find a wide-range of cuisines served at live cooking stations.

But, if you're watching what you eat on your travels, or are simply just health conscious there's the open air Mandhoo Restaurant that sits over-water and brings focus to bio-dynamic gourmet cuisine, cooking using only organic produce and beverages – to form a menu inspired by the Spa Retreat's five elements.

"Mandhoo is all about health. Using quick cooking methods and the finest produce, the menu here was carefully engineered with the assistance of a nutritionist. A spa menu can't just be about small portions and pretty presentation anymore, there's much more too it – down to calorie count, flavour, cooking methods and preparation techniques, there's a lot that goes into creating healthy cuisine, which is also tasty and fulfilling," says Chef Marco. As an added extra, the dining experience at Mandhoo also allows you to feed exotic fish and sharks below at intervals throughout the day.

Next on the gastro journey is Ufaa by Jeremy Leung. Ufaa, meaning 'happiness' in Maldivian, is everything it promises – from the laidback, welcoming interiors (including fabulous sand-filled floors), exquisite, authentic Chinese fare, to the knowledgeable, friendly servers – it's the perfect spot for sharing an afternoon or evening with your loved ones. It's the kind of place you visit twice, and the server remembers your favourite drink and how you like it, he knows your spice preference and what temperature you like your meat – Ufaa really offers a home comfort. Don't miss Chef Leung's hotpot dish, served with his signature broth and fresh fish, meat and seafood – or the handmade noodles that it's served with.

If you've still got time to spare, enjoy dinner under the stars – either as a private dinner on the beach, or at the Japanese-inspired beachside Koko Grill. It's a teppanyaki-style dinner, with chefs cooking up made-to-order dishes before your eyes. Or, for the romantic sunset lovers with an appetite for fresh grills, there's Sunset Grill, which sits above water and has cute, little private decks for privacy and a bit of holiday intimacy. The menu stuns with suggestions from both the land and sea, varying from Maldivian lobster (with bubbles, of course), fresh sea scallops and reef fish, or herb crusted yellow fin tuna – fished locally – to Cape Grim beef sirloin or ribeye, Scottish lamb rack or duck break served with pickled Japanese cucumber.

Dining options at Conrad Maldives really are endless.

"Food is always moving forward, and personally as a chef I understand the importance of keeping your interests in global trends alive – our menus here at Conrad Maldives reflect that. You may think that because we are remote and far away from much of normality, that we're out of touch with the latest in food, but I can assure that we are not," reflects Chef Marco.

Moving into this year, the chef also has plans to introduce Maldivian cooking classes, a chef's table, Sunday brunch, and a few other food-related concepts – perfect for all of you discerning foodies.





Relax and rejuvenate

So, your stomach is full and you're ready to explore. I know – the Maldives has a reputation for lacking in activities, but that's definitely not true (unless you plan on staying for several consecutive months). Aside from lazing around on the stunning beaches or various swimming pools, there's a range of unique experiences available. Head out on a dolphin-spotting excursion, fishing trip, or go snorkeling with whale sharks, where you'll bump into schools of tropical, beautifully coloured fish, eagle rays, manta rays, turtles and more – the experience is breathtaking, so don't forget to bring the GoPro along.

Or if you're in the mood to for a little action, take a trip to the watersports center to find jet skis, kayaks, jet packs, diving equipment, and more. Be sure to pick up your snorkeling kit from the Dive Center – you never know what you'll see at beaches surrounding the resort. Paddle over to the reef where an array of gorgeous coral live – the neon pinks and eye-opening yellow and orange shades can be seen perfectly in the clear waters, along with Nemo and all of his friends.

Relax at early morning yoga, which takes place at an idyllic yoga pavilion overlooking the ocean – it's true tranquility. Then have some fun in the afternoon at a cocktail making class – what's best is savouring your masterful creations afterwards, while chilled tunes play in the background – it's a real 'watching the world go by' sort of moment.

Now, whether you're looking for your annual detox fix or just a reason to be pampered, the resort's spas (yes, there are two), are both well worth a visit. First there's the Over-Water Spa, which is every bit luxurious and magical as it sounds. It's slightly secluded and branches off out into the water with several treatment rooms with glass flooring enabling you to see the ocean life below and receive your massage simultaneously. Secondly, the Spa Retreat is a different affair completely. Here you'll not only be able to have a range of holistic treatments and spa packages, but receive the services of a naturopath, nutritionist or personal trainer – this is also the place to come to have your hair done, or do a bit of shopping – you can't beat the island-chic wear.

No matter the spa you choose to visit, expect a truly personalised service. The spa team really can't do enough for you and make it their business to ensure you're as relaxed as possible. Ladies, to add to the beach look, ask your therapist to braid your hair as the massage wraps up (…I kept mine in for 2 days!). It really is the perfect rejuvenation retreat, and you'll leave walking on air.

Pristine island elegance

Whatever direction your journey in the Maldives takes you down, I'm sure by the end of your adventure you'll agree that it's undoubtedly one of the most beautiful destinations in the world.

Natural beauty aside, the small islands offer much more than meets the eye and more importantly, they are safe. It's a classy getaway destination where you'll not be hassled by street vendors or tour companies trying to sell day trips (in fact, there are no taxis on Rengali island, just golf buggies for chauffeuring you from A to B). It's all very carefree and is the type of place you truly feel sad to leave upon departure.

As your seaplane takes off and you soak up your last postcard view of the island, you're left with a profound sense of calm, amidst thoughts of gently splashing waves, softly swaying palms, mouthwatering food, and of course, inescapable beauty.





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PICTURE PERFECT PHUKET

Thailand's magical mountainous island proves the perfect destination for discerning foodies on the lookout for something new. We travel to Outrigger Laguna Phuket to discover gourmet delights and more. By Sophie McCarrick

Text by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs SUPPLIED



"Sawatdee khap", our friendly driver welcomes at Phuket Airport as he bows and presses his hands together, before guiding us to a private minibus, where fresh, lemon-pressed towels and chilled water await – what a generous, respectful welcome I reflect, as we begin our 30 minute journey to Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort.

This wouldn't be the last time we received such an embracing reception over the next couple of days – each as kind and welcoming as the previous – something I later learnt to simply call, Thai hospitality.

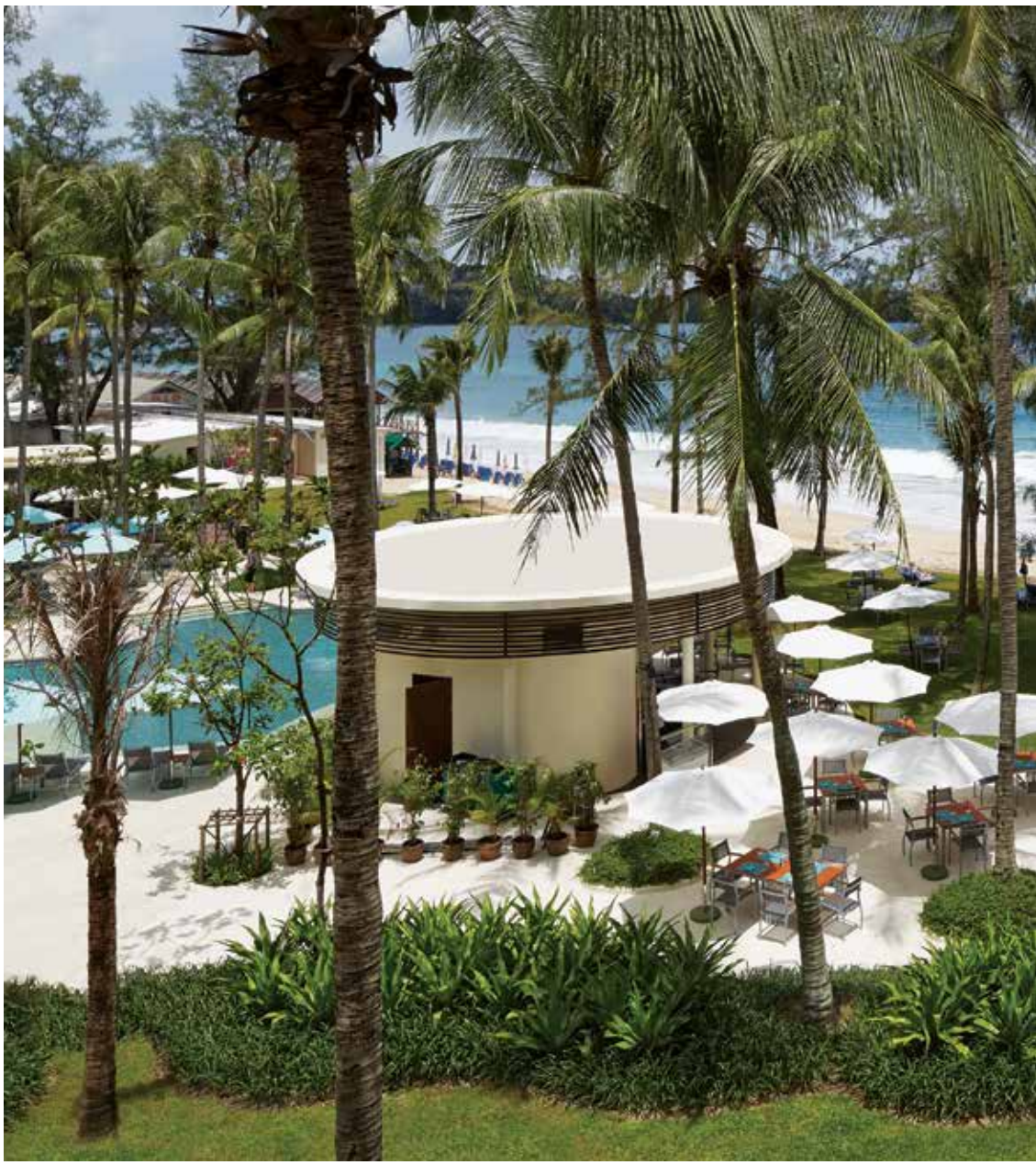
Upon reaching our destination, it's apparent that this resort benefits from several beautiful natural advantages. Encircled by a picturesque lagoon, which you're able to take idyllic boat trips around, Outrigger Laguna Phuket sits upon the shores of Bang Tao Beach, with sunset views overlooking the Andaman Sea – the scene is tropical and beautiful to say the least.

The hotel reception is open to the elements and features a stunning steeple Thai roof, dark wood furnishings and gorgeous flower arrangements of varied species – although it's the colourful orchids that stand out to me.

Around the entire resort, well-manicured gardens and pretty blooms line the way, with postcard-worthy mountainous backdrops grabbing my attention in nearly every direction I look.

It's hard to believe that just after a six-hour flight from Dubai, I'm encompassed in luscious natural surroundings – even if just for a weekend getaway, this destination is without a doubt an ideal spot for escaping the hustle and bustle of city life.

One thing that I particularly like is the distinct presence of culture and heritage here – something I feel is vital to truly experiencing a new destination, otherwise you may as well be vacationing in a hotel neighbouring your home. Outrigger Laguna seamlessly brings together all elements of a great resort, to culminate a formula that really works.



With 225 guest rooms, eight suites and a luxurious two-bedroom villa on offer, the resort is more than equipped to catering for families, friends and couples alike. Accommodation interiors here are contemporary and fresh, with slight Thai touches throughout and each featuring their own individual wow-factors – a highlight being that every room or suit offers unrivalled views over the lagoon or glistening Andaman Sea.

Something for everyone

Whether you're ready to explore or relax by the beach, all it takes is a look around Outrigger Laguna to realise that there's activities suited for keeping anyone and everyone satisfied – no matter the age.

As a beach lover, I found my element sitting beachside watching the world go by, while fellow guests enjoyed water sports including jet skiing, wind surfing, kayaking, scuba diving, tubing and more. Or, for a calmer experience, we were able to venture lagoon-side for stand-up paddle boarding or a short boat ride.

GETTING THERE

Emirates Airlines fly daily from Dubai International Airport into Phuket, Thailand. Ticket prices start from US$800 (around Dhs3,000) for economy, and US$2,000 (around Dhs8,000) for business class. Please note that these figures are priced based on travel during high season.

Visit: www.emirates.com



For children, not only does the resort have it's very own fun 'Koh Kids Club' teamed by a friendly group of nannies, there's also an exciting 55-metre spiral slide that slips into a specially designed, children's swimming pool (which sits aside various other adult-friendly pools).

Next up, is the Angsana Day Spa – one of my favourite locations of the trip, and not just because of the professionalism and service provided by the therapist (Thai massages truly live up to expectation) – but rather, for the sights. After the tranquil treatment, guests are invited to sit overlooking the lagoon. It's one of the most serene moments you could imagine – surrounded only by nature, here the spa allows you to completely relax and be at peace. I'd recommend timing it for sunset, to add to the experience.

Culinary delights

As keen food enthusiasts, you'll be pleased to hear that Laguna as a destination resort has more than 30 restaurants on offer for visitors, which are all accessible via free shuttle buses.

For diners wishing to dine a little closer, Outrigger's onsite restaurants have a range of mouthwatering options for breakfast, lunch and dinner, or even a quick snack.

At the resort's Locavore Restaurant, the kitchens are divided into two, one for creating





authentic Thai cuisine and one for international flavours. But, when in Thailand, one must eat Thai food – and that we did. The Thai's really love their use of spice (I definitely learnt my lesson), so if you're not used to it be sure to profoundly state to the server that you don't want your food spicy. Spice preferences aside, Thai cuisine is simply divine, it's so flavourful and beautifully prepared – you can tell with each bite that a lot of love and care went into creating the dish. There's some really interesting taste combinations – starting with a tom yum goong, a spicy and sweet tiger prawn soup, seasoned with lime, chili and lemongrass (another ingredient the locals love!), or a personal favourite of mine was the pad thai nuapoo goong pow, which is made up of traditional fried rice noodles with tamarind, bean sprouts, garlic and crab meat and grilled prawns. Other dishes you can expect to find on the menu include the likes of goon pad med ma-maung, a stir-fried shrimp dish that is served with cashew nut and dried chili, or pla lui suan, a crispy whole sea bass that is mixed with Thai herbs. Whatever dish you opt for at Locavore, it's near impossible to be disappointed.

'To be a great chef you really need to expose your taste buds to a variety of different textures, tastes and flavours.'

During the day, enjoy lunch next to the beach and alongside the pool at Edgewater Beach Bistro. It's a lovely little spot that allows you to gaze out to sea, and also neighbouring coastal Phuket wrapping around the bay.

For something a little more elite, Outrigger Laguna also homes a premium club, for guests looking for that little bit extra. The Club sits looking out over the lagoon – offering a slightly different angle to that I was explaining the spa provided – it's a heavenly sight.

Although open for breakfast and dinner, which is served a la carte and buffet style, The Club also opens for varied other food and beverage concepts including high-tea and happy hour. All in all, the waterside venue is well worth the package upgrade, proving a great area for spending time with family or friends, or alternatively solo for some reflective 'me time'.

Mediterranean delights

Adding to the resort's impressive culinary repertoire is Metzo's Bistro and Bar, which reopened at the end of 2015 following an extensive refurbishment. Harmoniously bringing both Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavours to Phuket's door, Metzo's Lebanese chef Mustapha Haj Omar explains that every dish listed on his menu has come from a recipe handed down to him by either his grandmother or mother – which is evident in his food. It's food with soul.

Inside, the restaurant boasts a sleek, modern, open feel, yet isn't cold. It's welcoming and inviting with subtle design aspects that really make a difference, such as traditional Spanish-style tiles on the floor, warm coloured wooden chairs and intimate lighting.

When it comes to the food, think Morocco, Spain, Greece, Lebanon, Italy, Turkey and Egypt, to name a few. You may be wondering how one menu successfully delivers such a multitude of cuisines, but rest assured that chef Mustapha's menu is well thought out, organised and definitely not excessive – the only trouble you'll have here is resisting the urge to over-order.



Chef Mustapha's hummous recipe

200g cooked chickpeas
80g tahini paste
1 small clove garlic, minced
salt to taste
30g lemon juice
20g olive oil
4g paprika powder
4g parsley leaves

1 Place the cocked chickpeas, tahini paste, minced garlic, salt and lemon juice in the blender.
2 Blend on high, stopping to stir frequently, until the hummous is smooth, it should be soft and creamy.
3 To plate, spread the hummous on a medium size plate or in medium size mezze bowl, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with paprika and garnish with parsley leaves.











Served sharing-style, traditional mezze and tapas vary from your authentic antipasti, moutabal and hummous – the type of hummous you end up spooning out of the dish to finish (see recipe left) – bruschetta, mushroom and tomato frittata, gambas al ajillo, beef carpaccio and more. Whereas mains include favoured dishes such as lamb kofta, shish taouk, shawarma, lamb shank tajine, lobster cannelloni and chef Mustapha's signature dish, samakeh harra.

The chef, who held the role of head chef at the One & Only Reethi Rah Resort and Spa in the Maldives before joining Outrigger Laguna, says "samakeh harra is a Mediterranean dish and a good combination between local fish and sauce which is made from fresh ingredients such as vegetables, onion, garlic, pepper, coriander, parsley leaves cooked and sautéed in olive oil along with spices to create a wonderful aroma and flavour. The fish is gently cooked on the grill and served with sauce and potato wedges."

Something I thought was great about Metzo's menu was its emphasis on wholesome-made, quality food. Reflected throughout the entire







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menu, this value also stood when it came to the kids selection – refreshing to see a move away from the usual processed chicken nuggets and chips regime. Menu items include fresh chicken cube or tenderloin beef skewers with pita bread, bruschetta, and creamy chicken corn soup, amongst others.

It's quite apparent that only a high calibre of product is used in this kitchen. The chef notes, "I like to use the freshest of produce, and Lebanese and Mediterranean cuisine leans on fresh vegetables and meats."

As a word of advice for home cooks out there, chef Mustapha encourages "be passionate and don't be afraid to experiment with flavours. Recipe books are great guides for many dishes but they only act as a guide; of course they are important for highly technical dishes, or baking! Try new things and experience a variety. To be a great chef you really need to expose your taste buds to a variety of different textures, tastes and flavours!"

Phuket sights

While the focus at Outrigger Laguna is securely fixed on great, honest, quality food, in a laidback, welcoming environment – a draw that could easily keep you happily content within the resort's grounds during your stay – you may also want to venture outside of the Laguna to discover what Phuket is all about, like we did.

Aside from beautiful beach after beautiful beach – Karon, Kata, Surin, Patong and Nai Harn, to name a few – there's much to do around the province.

Like visiting local animals, however, be careful not to fall into tourist traps, as the area contains quite a few attractions that are quite clearly not honouring animal rights. We took a trip to a wonderful place called Bang Pe Waterfall, where a group of expats has established an amazing Gibbon Rehabilitation Centre. The project focuses on nurturing gibbons back to health and keeping them out of harms way – it's a wonderful place.

Next on the list is a trip to Big Buddha. The winding journey up to the 45-metre Buddha alone is an experience, with breathtaking birds-eye views over the Nakkerd Hills. Or, stop by the Chalong Temple – a temple said to be one of the best in Phuket.

Activities and sightseeing aside, Phuket is a vibrant, stunningly colourful destination, that's well worth a visit (or visits). With endless sites of beauty to discover, true Thai hospitality and a myriad of gourmet pleasures to relish in – you can't go wrong with a visit, to picture perfect Phuket.

Competition



Win!

A **3-night stay for 2 adults in Thailand** worth **Dhs7,500!**

Enjoy views of the spectacular Bang Tao Beach with a relaxing three-night stay for two adults at Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort, inclusive of daily breakfast, club privileges and Sunday brunch at Metzo's Restaurant.

You and your guest could win the chance to experience true Thai hospitality at the stunning, premier property, Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort in Thailand.

The resort occupies a prime position on the beautiful famed shores of Bang Tao Beach, where white sand and calm, clear waters combine to create an idyllic tropical setting. Set right on the beach, you'll have easy access to beach activities and water sports, which are perfect for families and couples alike.

This hotel is one of just a few in the Laguna Phuket area offering an exclusive club lounge with amenities including private check-in, dining and concierge services – ensuring your stay is nothing less than luxurious and memorable.

The prize draw for a three-night stay for two adults at Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort will be made at the end of February 2016. The prize is valid until November 15, 2016 and cannot be exchanged under any circumstances and is not transferable. The prize is not valid during peak and festive seasons (25-31 March and 2-6 June 2016). Reservations are required and confirmation is subject to availability. The winner must arrange their own flights to Phuket, Thailand.

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

Log on to bbcgoodfoodme.com
to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

Which beach is Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach resort located on?

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You and your guest are in with the chance of winning a much-needed staycation at the Radisson Blu Abu Dhabi Yas Island, an idyllic resort surrounded by the sparkling waters of the Arabian Gulf, where you'll feel worlds apart from the bustle of city life, yet conveniently located just minutes from a shopping centre, Yas Beach, Ferrari World and Yas Waterworld.

With stunning views of the sea and a soothing colour scheme of creams, golds and browns, the Radisson Blu suite is sure to make the lucky winner unwind in a peaceful island retreat. A plush king-size bed ensures a good night sleep, and the separate living area with a flat-screen television gives a 'home away from home' kind of feeling. A picturesque view from the private balcony while sipping coffee or reading the newspaper is always a perfect start to a beautiful day.

The winner also gets to choose any treatment at The Spa worth AED 1,000 and have an exclusive dining experience at Filini restaurant where Chef Luca Paltrinieri would prepare an authentic Italian meal for two.

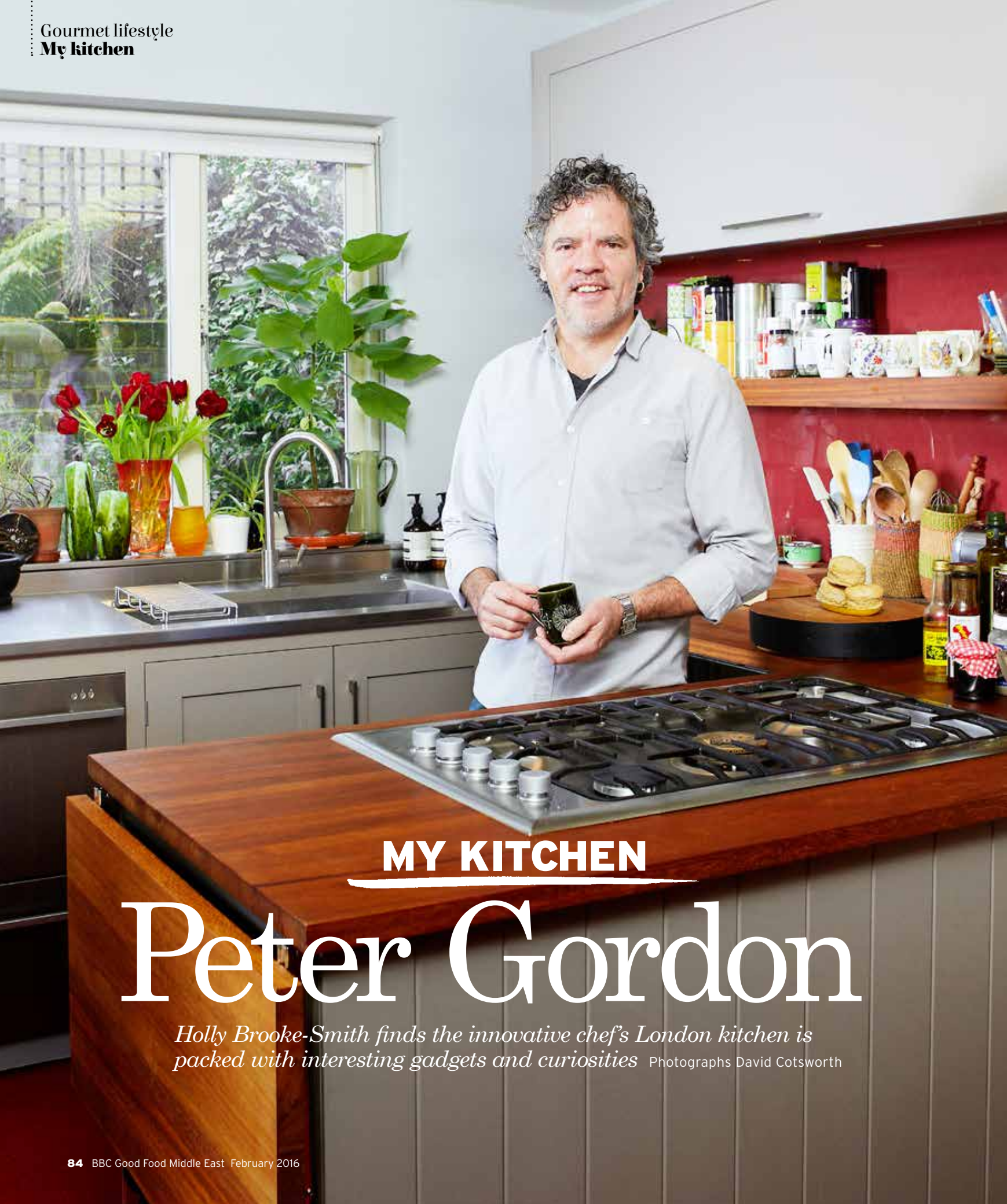
The prize draw for a two-night stay for two people at Radisson Blu Abu Dhabi Yas Island worth over AED 8,000 will be made at the end of February 2016. The prize is valid until August 31, 2016, reservations are required and confirmation is subject to availability.

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Which island in Abu Dhabi is Radisson Blu located on?

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MY KITCHEN

Peter Gordon

Holly Brooke-Smith finds the innovative chef's London kitchen is packed with interesting gadgets and curiosities Photographs David Cotsworth



ABOVE
Peter picked up these decorative spoons in Istanbul



ABOVE
Handcrafted knives made by Peter Lorimer
RIGHT The kitchen is decorated with Peter's paintings and pottery from Cornwall and Sydney





Peter roasts coffee beans in a roaster he bought in Israel

Born in New Zealand, Peter Gordon moved to Melbourne to train as a chef. Five years later he opened his first restaurant, The Sugar Club, in Wellington, New Zealand. He moved to London in 1989 and quickly became known for his groundbreaking fusion cuisine. He set up The Sugar Club in Notting Hill in 1995, then opened The Providores and Tapa Room in Marylebone in 2001. He has written seven recipe books and lives in east London.

How much of this kitchen is inherited?

The red lino floor was here when I bought the house and I thought, 'Wow, that's weird'. But by the time I came to do up the kitchen a couple of years later (it was the last room to do in the house), I realised that I loved the floor. The previous owner was an artist and had found it in a hospital skip.

What have you installed since you moved in?

I put in the workbench, and recently attached the work surface extension on hinges. I'd saved some extra wood for a chopping board, and I met this Kiwi guy who made it for me. It has a gas hob on top, but I also love induction – what I really wanted was four gas and two induction rings.

Sadly, at the time I couldn't find anything the right size. I like an island hob: apart from the practical aspects of doing a bit of filming in here, you can chat to your mates while you cook.

Tell us about your oven

It's the best! It's a wide built-in model from Fisher & Paykel. You can't get a domestic version in the UK, only in New Zealand and the US. You can easily fit a whole turkey in it, the controls are incredibly simple, and it has a rotisserie setting. The wide shape also means there's lots of space to store stuff underneath.

Do you use it for everything?

I also have a built-in microwave combi oven, which is good for when I don't want to turn on the big oven, especially if I come home late and want to eat quickly. I've got no problem with microwaves, but space on the work surface is limited.

Your dishwasher looks interesting!

It's actually two dishwashers in separate pull-out drawers. They were hugely successful in America, and I had the first one in the UK in my previous kitchen. They're so practical, and also good for kosher cooking as you can separate dishes that contained milk from those used for meat.

What's important and personal to you about your kitchen?

I like everything to have a bit of a story, which is why I like ceramics, glass and things people forge, rather than items that come from a factory.

I bring back old ceramics from my travels, and I love junk shops. I've been collecting Poole Pottery china since I was 18. My partner collected Poole stuff when he was younger too! I've got hundreds of cups and plates. I also collect interesting spoons – the ones from Istanbul were cheap as chips.

Where did you get your coffee roaster?

I bought it in Israel. You put green coffee beans in the barrel, then roast them by rotating over a flame. The man I bought it from thought everyone should have one. I get my beans from Caravan Coffee.



Broadway Market

'London is exciting and inspirational'

● I get ideas from travelling, eating out and seeing what's in markets. I'm close to Broadway Market in Hackney, and that's generally where I go to get ingredients if I'm having a dinner party. There's a gorgeous organic veg shop there, and a brilliant butcher called Hill & Szrok. They serve dinner in the evening – I went recently and had ox heart, oxtail stew and beautiful sprouting broccoli. There's also a fishmonger called Fin & Flounder and a lovely natural wine store. And the excellent E5 Bakehouse is close by, under the arches at London Fields.

● When I arrived in London in 1989, the food scene was a tiny sliver of what it is now. The cafés were all French, the coffee 'scene' didn't really exist, and restaurants were either terrible or expensive – there wasn't really a middle field. Now, just look at all the inspiring informal places like Brindisa or Polpo.

● I'm always excited to discover new foods and I was amazed by how many ingredients were available when I arrived in London. There was all this stuff we couldn't get in New Zealand, because it's so hard to import fresh fruit and veg (the biodiversity is really protected). If you go to London's Chinatown, you find shops that have three shipments a week from Malaysia or Thailand, for example. It's just brilliant.



Among the characterful items in Peter's kitchen are woven utensil baskets, lots of mugs and a Chinese moon cake mould

Tell us about your pottery

The figures are by a woman in Cornwall and the pottery is made by a guy in Sydney. He's got a kiln the size of this room and puts everything in to burn for a week – and just sees what comes out. I think he's brilliant.

A kitchen is a place of enjoyment, I spend a lot of time in here – so I love having some of my paintings in here too. When friends come over for dinner, they'll all be in here while I finish cooking, so what are you going to have on your wall – nothing?

What about your knives?

They are made by a man in New Zealand called Peter Lorimer. He forges his own steel, and collects wood and recycled fence posts and trees for the handles. He made my round bottle openers as well.

I love anything that feels handcrafted, however I do go through phases with my knives. I have a favourite knife that I bought in Kyoto – it's only meant to be used for chicken. It's pictured in one of my books, but alongside a photo of fish. I had to explain in the method that the knife wasn't meant for fish, it just looked good!

Who's on your bookshelf?

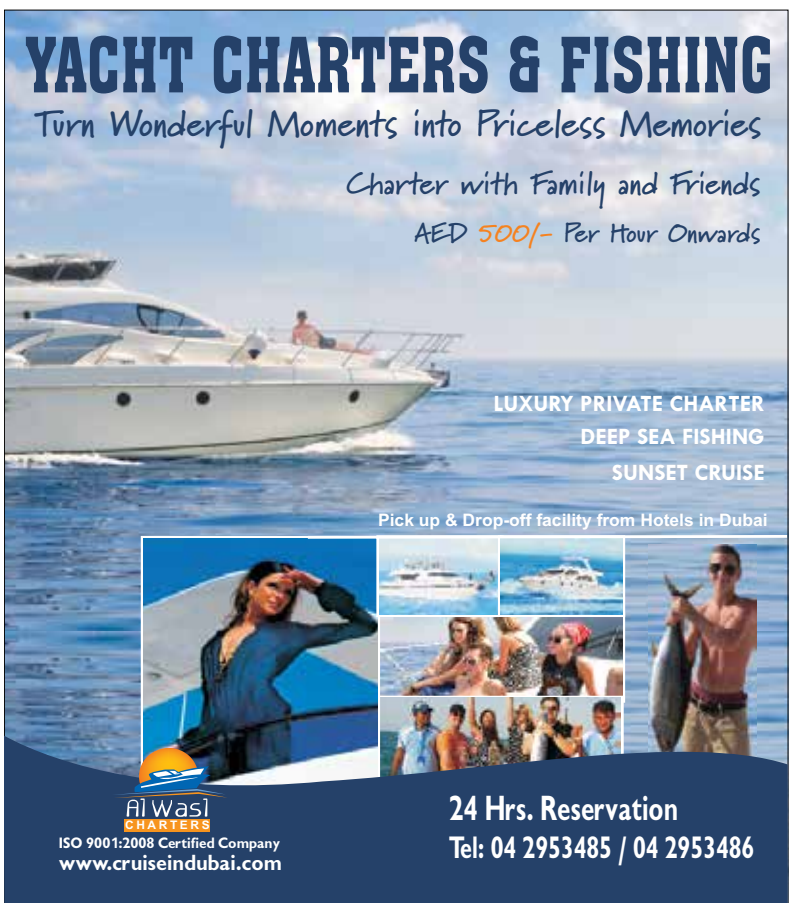
The ones in here are all by friends – Yotam Ottolenghi, Christine Manfield, the guys at The Engine Room in Auckland. And the first book I ever worked on is here. It was for Keith Floyd; I was his recipe tester. The photographer Jean Cazals went on to do my first six books. I'm going to donate loads of books to a local school – I've got so many, and I really don't need them all.

Are you a keen gardener too?

Yes, my walled garden is a wonderful space. I specifically chose a lot of New Zealand plants to go out the back. Initially I thought I'd love a veg garden, but realised I'm not here enough to look after it properly.

The plant on my windowsill is a cutting from a cutting of Sigmund Freud's linden tree at his house in Hampstead. Some friends bought it at Clifton Nurseries in Maida Vale – its ancestry goes straight to his tree.

Market photograph: facebook.com/dancingchefnatasha





Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to gourmet goodies, up for grabs.

WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT SHIBA RESTAURANT, THE MEYDAN HOTEL, WORTH DHS1,000

Dining at the Shiba Restaurant is an exciting culinary journey around the vibrant Asian cuisine. Shiba offers its guest a variety of flavoursome signature dishes in the modern décor setting. The restaurant also features the sophisticated Shiba Bar with its variety of exotic drinks – a perfect location to start your evening or get-together with friends. It promises to be a memorable evening with fantastic food.



WIN! A CULINARY EXPERIENCE WITH CHEFXCHANGE, WORTH DHS500

A fabulous platform that allows foodies to search, discover and book private chefs for hire in the comfort of their own home, ChefXChange makes the process of finding the best chefs in your local area seamless and convenient. On your chosen date, your chef will arrive with the equipment and fresh ingredients to cook up a gastronomic delight. The talented chefs are also available to showcase their culinary skills at dinners, brunches, lunches and BBQs too.





WIN! CELEBRATE CHINESE NEW YEAR WITH DINNER FOR TWO AT SHERATON DUBAI'S PEACOCK RESTAURANT, WORTH DHS650

The Peacock Restaurant at Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort is one of the most established Chinese restaurants in Dubai. The restaurant serves traditional, authentic Chinese and Szechuan dishes prepared by Chef Xiao Jun, such as homemade dim sum, peking duck, and crispy sweet chili beef. Your dinner will include soft drinks and will be one of the best celebrations in town for Chinese New Year.



WIN! A DINING VOUCHER TO MINT LEAF OF LONDON, DIFC, WORTH DHS500

A stylish fine dining venue, renowned for serving high-quality modern Indian cuisine to DIFC patrons. Taking a fresh approach in 2016, a new menu provides healthy options and caters to those with strict dietary requirements, ensuring that those with allergies or dietary restrictions have even more to love about Mint Leaf of London. The entire menu comprises healthy creations that range from gluten free to nut free, along with low fat, organic and vegan friendly options.

WIN! A DINING VOUCHER FOR BARREL 12, PALM JUMEIRAH, WORTH DHS500

Barrel 12 is a unique urban sports bistro at Palm Views (Marina East) on Palm Jumeirah, using high quality ingredients to dish up a diverse selection of British classics with a modern twist. With an upbeat, friendly atmosphere, Barrel 12 boasts seven large TV screens showing all major sporting events, and an outdoor terrace with views of the Palm's Marina East and Dubai landmarks. Picnic hampers also available for take-away.



WIN! A DINING VOUCHER FOR SUN& MEDITERRANEAN LOUNGE, WORTH DHS500

Sun& Mediterranean Lounge, located on Palm Jumeirah at Palm Views (Marina West), is the perfect place to relax over an imaginative range of sharing plates created with fresh, local ingredients and a Mediterranean twist. With its relaxed setting, friendly team and welcoming atmosphere, Sun& offers stunning sunset views, laid-back tunes and a chilled-out vibe. Don't miss the chargrilled octopus!



To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Nuts about almonds!

From nut butter to non-dairy 'milk', our appetite for almonds is booming



Almost one million bees are needed to pollinate California's almond groves – the largest managed pollination event in the world.





If you're snacking on almonds, choose nuts with the skin on – the outer covering is where most antioxidants are concentrated.

Sweet almonds are the ones we eat. Bitter almonds are used in extracts and liqueurs, and also to make soaps. The nuts contain toxins (including hydrogen cyanide) that are removed during processing.



A single almond needs around 5 litres of water to grow. Around 80% of the world's almonds are grown in drought-stricken California, where critics blame them for worsening water shortages.

Technically, almonds are not nuts but the seeds of the fruit of the almond tree.



Almonds are bursting with good (mono-unsaturated) fats, fibre, vitamin E, magnesium, antioxidants and other key nutrients. Between 2003 and 2013, global production rose by

70%

Ground almonds are the key ingredient in marzipan, believed to originate in Toledo, Spain, as early as the 9th century. It remains the region's most celebrated dessert.



Cherries, peaches, apricots and plums belong to the same family as almonds.





The Romans considered almonds a fertility charm and gave them to newlyweds.



NUT MILKS ON TEST – PAGE 134

3 ways to eat your almonds

gf For these recipes and more, visit *bbcgoodfoodme.com*



Almond nut butter
Takes just 10 minutes to make – great on toast!



Chicken, red pepper & almond traybake
One-pan supper packed with flavour.



Baked almond & date tart
Rich & sticky winter dessert.

Feature SUE QUINN | Photographs GETTY, ISTOCKPHOTO, ALAMY


CHAMAS
CHURRASCARIA & BAR
Every cut
makes an impression
Discover a tradition of taste, straight from Brazil.
Immerse yourself in authentically Brazilian traditions, as the passadores at Chamas continually serve you juicy cuts of slow-roasted meats, till you show them the red side of your coaster. With delicious cocktails and the rhythms of a Latino band, this is a truly unique carnival.
Price starting from AED 285* for 16 cuts of meats, a rich gourmet salad buffet, grilled pineapple skewers and more.
For reservations, please call InterContinental Abu Dhabi on 800 423 463, or visit www.dining-intercontinental-ad.ae
*Price subject to 10% service charge and 6% tourism fee.

GET INSPIRALIZED

Turn simple vegetables into healthy exciting meals

We've all embraced spiralizing as a simple and healthy way to transform raw veg into spaghetti spirals and make food prep fun. But there's so much more to it than just slinky salads and lower-carb spaghetti – think delicious desserts, tasty twisty treats and even comforting casseroles. In fact spiralizing lets us make super-healthy versions of lots of our favourite feasts, all lower in carbs but packed full of fresh fruit and veg flavours, and we've got lots of ideas to help you get inspiralized.



Discover 1000's of innovative products for your kitchen and home, at your nearest Lakeland store and online.

The new catalogues are in stores now

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